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# THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

— No. 17 —



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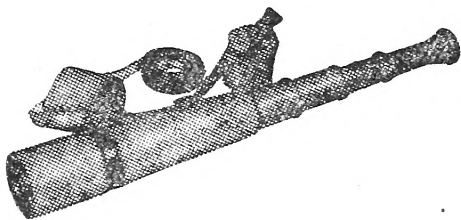
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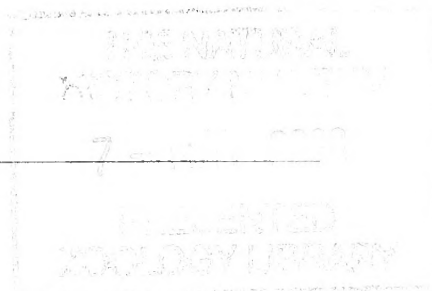
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# THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Number 17, 1952



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Published December 1953 by  
**THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, S.W.7.

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**DEPT. 10, GREENRIGG WORKS, WOODFORD GREEN ESSEX**







# The London Bird Report 1952

Edited by

G. E. Manser and N. J. P. Wadley

Assisted by the Records Committee of the Ornithological Section :

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## Introduction

ONCE more the number of observers reporting to the Society during the year was a record, and 190 different species were seen. One of the outstanding events was the wreck of Leach's Petrels early in November, when 7 dead birds were picked up, and 2 live birds were seen, one on the Brent Reservoir, and one at Staines. A Gannet on the Round Pond, Kensington Gardens, in October was another remarkable record. The autumn was also a good one for wader migration. Parties of well over thirty Dunlin and sixty Ringed Plover were recorded, with Ruff, Greenshank and Little Stint in their company. The outstanding movement was the Wood Sandpiper passage. Observers from Perry Oaks recorded parties of up to seventeen during August, the movement extending from early in July until October 5th, and from reports outside the Society's area, it is clear that Wood Sandpipers were unusually numerous elsewhere in the autumn of 1952. The appearance of an Avocet at a Power Station near Dartford caused natural enthusiasm, the bird staying until the end of the year. Of the other waders occurring within the area, Turnstone, Spotted Redshank, Grey Plover, Oyster-catcher and Stone Curlew are worthy of mention.

Little Gulls were again seen in several places during the autumn, and an occasional Kittiwake, including one in St. James's Park, was recorded.

Among nesting birds, the breeding of a pair of Woodcock in Surrey is of particular interest, as although nesting is often suspected, it is seldom proved. The maintained breeding strength of the Woodlark and Red-backed Shrike deserve mention. Reports of the breeding of Nightjar have again been disappointing, though the Hawfinch seems to be holding its own. Probably the outstanding record was of a pair

of Marsh Warblers at Swanscombe Marshes, where a pair feeding two young were watched on several occasions at the end of July. The empty nest was subsequently found and identified. There are further records of Blackcap wintering.

Inner London has once more a remarkable list of records for the year. In addition to the Gannet in Kensington Gardens, a Leach's Petrel was picked up dead in Regents Park, and there were several records of Long-tailed Duck and of Peregrine. The heavy storm of March 28th blew several Pheasants into the built-up area, and one of these was photographed feeding on a bomb site in Holborn. The first record of Stone Curlew was reported from a Kilburn sandpit in August, and Stock Doves nested in Battersea Park and Regents Park for the first time. No less remarkable was the nesting of a pair of Grey Wagtails within the City, where two broods were successfully reared. This is also the first nesting record for Inner London.

Once more some records recently submitted to the Committee emphasise the difficulties which an organisation such as ours must face, in deciding what reports are to be accepted and published. We have in mind a recent record submitted from one of the small reservoirs. The first report, by a single observer, gave a clear and unmistakable description of a Red-throated Diver—the slim outline, the speckled back, and the upward slanting lower mandible were all clearly seen. A further group of reports described the bird as a Black-throated Diver, and the supporting evidence in this case also was convincing—the thick neck, the plain back, darker than the head, and no up-turn of the bill. Subsequently a third report came from an observer who stated that he was familiar with both Red-throated Divers and Great Northern Divers in the Northern Isles, and he described the bird as without doubt a Great Northern Diver, though no specific points were made in support of the opinion.

From the evidence submitted, it was clear that either there had been two or three birds on the reservoir, or two of the three reports were mistaken. As a result of further questions put to the observers, it seemed almost certain that there was only one diver on the reservoir that day, and in fact discussion had taken place between some of the parties as to the species of the bird. We are sure that all the reports were genuine and well-intentioned, but they do illustrate the difficulty which a Committee such as ours must now face, when so many observers are fully conversant with the literature giving the diagnostic features of debatable species. We hope, therefore, that members will bear with us in our difficulties, and not be discouraged if sometimes their records do not appear in print.

During the year, the Society continued to take part in several national investigations, and to work on specific problems of its own. The results of the Gravel Pit Enquiry are now published in this issue. The Starling Investigation continues to show interesting returns in the recoveries of ringed birds, but it is felt that an interval is needed before the results can be interpreted and published.



Progress on the preparation of the "Birds of the London Area, 1900-50" continues, and considerably over half the work is now in draft, including the greater part of the specific list.

A check was made in the winter of 1952-53 on all the known roosts of gulls in the Area, and this will be repeated in the winter of 1953-54. Very little information on the numbers or proportions of the various species of gulls at these roosts is on record, and any notes on this subject for the past or present would be particularly welcome before a summary of the data available is prepared in the near future.

The duck counts organised nationally by the British Section of the International Wildfowl Inquiry were planned to obtain data that might throw light on the widespread belief that wildfowl were declining in numbers. Five of the ten winter periods originally envisaged have been completed, and an account of some of the results in the last two winters appears in this volume.

This Society, in co-operation with the Kent Ornithological Society and the Hastings Natural History Society, has played an active role in the formation of the Dungeness Bird Observatory, which although outside our 20 miles' radius, is the closest trapping station to London, and it is hoped that it will receive the active support of ringers and those wishing to become ringers. Enquiries should be addressed to H. A. R. Cawkell, 6 Canute Road, Hastings, Sussex, who will be pleased to supply details of accommodation and facilities to intending visitors.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Records Committee welcomes the many new members and contributors to this Report, and hopes that they will continue to support all activities of the Section. The help given by neighbouring societies, official bodies and private individuals is gratefully acknowledged. We would like to thank A. W. Bartlet, Mrs. W. I. Brewer, J. J. Garr, F. J. L. Mitchell, I. C. T. Nisbet, J. L. F. Parslow, D. C. Pegram and Professor E. H. Warmington for valuable help; to G. R. Edwards for the drawing of the Hoopoe on the cover; to C. G. des Forges for the frontispiece, and to Eric Hosking for the photograph of the Water Rail at the nest; to the Editors of *British Birds*, and to the officers of the Essex Bird Watching and Preservation Society, the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, the Kent Ornithological Society, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the British Empire Naturalists Association, the Zoological Society of London, and the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks, for exchanges of records and information. We also have to acknowledge many kindnesses from the Metropolitan Water Board, the London County Council and the Middlesex County Council. Finally we offer our thanks to our contributors whose records have made this report possible; their names will be found in the list which follows.

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# BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA 1952

A REPORT OF THE BIRD LIFE WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF  
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

**T**HIS report follows the British Ornithologists' Union's "Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland" (1952) based on the Wetmore classification, and the numbers preceding each species refer to that List, where the full scientific name will be found. The vernacular names are those adopted by the Editors of *British Birds* magazine as announced in the January, 1953, issue (vol. 46, 1).

All records are for 1952 except where otherwise stated. The initials following each record refer to the observer(s) responsible for it. The six counties within the circle of twenty miles radius are indicated by their initials, *viz.*:—B = Bucks.; E = Essex; H = Herts.; K = Kent; M = Middlesex; S = Surrey. Records for the Thames between Richmond and Putney, and from the adjacent Barn Elms and Lonsdale Road Reservoirs, are grouped under T owing to the frequent movements between these two reservoirs and the River. The following abbreviations are also used:—*B.B.* = *British Birds* magazine; *K.B.R.* = *Kent Bird Report*; *L.B.R.* = *London Bird Report*; G.P. = gravel pit; Res. = reservoir; S.F. = sewage farm.

An open map of the London Area will be found useful for a full appreciation of many of the records. As the history of some of the species is intended to be continuous, reference to the systematic list of previous issues of the *L.B.R.* is recommended.

## 1 Black-throated Diver

K Stone Marshes, two stayed on Cotton Farm lake from Feb. 2-9 (GB, WIB, FJH, KHP). Full plumage notes have been received.

## 2 Great Northern Diver

E Girling Res., one on Nov. 2 (JD). King George V Res., one seen on Feb. 3 (HWR), one on Nov. 8 (JLFP).

M Staines Reservoirs, one from Jan. 5 until May 18 (see *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 22) recorded by many observers.

## 4 Red-throated Diver

E King George V Res., one dead bird on Feb. 3 (HWR). Girling Res., two on Nov. 14-15 (JD).



**K** Stone Marshes, from Jan. 20 until Mar. 22 numbers fluctuated from one to four. Individual birds showed considerable plumage variation and degrees of oiling. Thus it was possible to distinguish at least seven birds during that period (KHP). West Wickham, one found in a garden on Jan. 25 was subsequently released on the Kent coast (JMB).

### 5 Great Crested Grebe

See page 41 for the annual report of the status of this species in the London Area.

### 6 Red-necked Grebe

Correction *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 22. Delete the Essex record. This was a record of a Black-necked Grebe inadvertently included under this species.

**M** Staines, King George VI Res., one on Oct. 26 (TLB).

**S** Mitcham Common, one on a small pond on Mar. 2 (BPA).

### 8 Black-necked Grebe

**E** Walthamstow Res., one on Nov. 30 (WCD).

**M** Brent Res., one on Aug. 19, Sept. 5 and Nov. 18 (JFWB, GCG, EHW).

Kempton Park Res., one on Sept. 21 (HPM). Staines, King George VI Res., nine on Apr. 5, one on May 14 and June 10. Up to 15 from July 5 until Oct. 26, two on Nov. 2 and one on Nov. 23. Staines Res., one on May 4 and Aug. 17, four on Sept. 6 and three on Sept. 7 (many observers).

### 9 Little Grebe

Flocking movements were again reported in the autumn from Brent Reservoir where 60 birds were seen on Sept. 4 and 7 and between 40/50 during the first week of October. Numbers gradually fell to about 12 during the second half of December (GCG, JCL, EHW).

### 12 Leach's Petrel

**E** Dead birds were found at the following places:—King George V Res., one on Nov. 2 (JLFP); Upminster, one on Nov. 2 (RS); Waltham Abbey, one on Oct. 31 (WHD).

**M** Single birds were seen at Brent and Staines Reservoirs on Nov. 3 (JCA, DAP, DWT). Littleton, Queen Mary Res., a dead bird on Nov. 2 (RWHN, FHW). Inner London: Regent's Park, one picked up dead on Oct. 28 was taken to the Zoo for identification (JY).

**S** Two dead birds, one on the tow path at Petersham on Nov. 2 (FRM), the second, at Kingston Hill on Nov. 14 (JLR).

### 27 Gannet

**M** Inner London: Kensington Gardens, an adult on the Round Pond associating with the swans on Oct. 14. This bird did not appear to be oiled or injured (CHH, CHFP, WGT).

**28 Cormorant**

The general seasonal status of this species remains unchanged (see *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 22). Several single birds were recorded in flight over built-up parts of the Area. A roost was located near Yeoveney close to the Bucks./Middx. border on Dec. 26. At least 24 birds were seen in the tall trees (ICTN).

**30 Heron**

E Little Parndon, 14 occupied nests (wcd). Walthamstow Res., 58 occupied nests (ERP, BAR). Wanstead Park, four pairs nested (cw).  
M Kempton Park, 88 occupied nests (EMG). Isleworth Eyot, one pair nested successfully (AM-J).

S Gatton Park, 12 occupied nests; again none at Godstone (HB). Richmond Park, 20 pairs bred (RWHN).

The total for the London Area for 1952 was 197, showing a decrease of seven occupied nests on the 1951 total. Excluding Little Parndon, Isleworth Eyot and Gatton Park the total was 170 against a comparable figure of 182 for 1951. This year's figure approximates to the general decrease of 6% in Thames Drainage Area (see *B.B.*, 46, p. 101).

**38 Bittern**

M Ruislip Lido, one seen on Oct. 4 (CB). This bird, first observed resting on a log in a reed-bed, was later seen at about ten yards when full plumage details were obtained.

**46 Teal**

No breeding records have been received, but two birds were seen at Moor Mill on June 1 and a pair was recorded at Perry Oaks on June 15 (EHW, CAW).

**47 Garganey**

E Rainham, two or three at Berwick Pond during April, two pairs on May 11 and a single drake on June 2 (MJA, BH, RS).

H Aldenham Res. and Old Parkbury G.P., one at each place on Apr. 27 (BLS, EHW).

M Staines Reservoirs, at least three birds on Mar. 23 and during most of April. Solitary drakes were observed on May 10 and 24 on Staines Moor, and a pair was seen on King George VI Res. on May 10 (NHP, CAW *et al.*).

Inner London: Hyde Park, two drakes and a duck on the Serpentine on Mar. 12 (GBC, CHH, RWHN, CHFP). This is the first record for Inner London.

K Ruxley G.P., a pair remained from Mar. 29 until June but there was no evidence of breeding. One here on July 27 and 29 (WIB, FJH, KHP).

S Weybridge, a duck with two small young, unable to fly, on the River Wey on June 14 (SK).

T Barn Elms Res., one on July 24 and Aug. 31 (HBF, AWW)

#### 49 Gadwall

E Lockwood Res., a drake on Apr. 12 and 20 (HWR).

M Brent Res., a pair on Aug. 24 (EHW). Staines, King George VI Res., two on Sept. 6; one on Nov. 26 and Dec. 21 (PJH, FJJ, HPM).

K Ruxley G.P., five on Sept. 19 (AWB). Stone Marshes, one on Oct. 11 (FJH, WIB).

S Richmond Park, 13 on the Upper Pen Pond on Dec. 28 (FWL).

T Barn Elms Res., at least two pairs bred (GLS, AGGT). A maximum at this reservoir of c. 40 on Feb. 10. From early October until the end of the year numbers fluctuated between 15 and 25 (many observers).

#### 52 Pintail

E Hainault Forest lake, a drake on Sept. 26 and 27 (MRC, MDW).

H London Colney, one on the gravel pit on Nov. 30 (RCL, scl).

M Brent Res., three birds on Feb. 2 and on Sept. 17 (AG, ECO, DAPP). Littleton, Queen Mary Res., 10 on Mar. 23 (RWHH, CVB). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 17 (CAW). Staines Res., two on Jan. 7 and 31; a pair on Feb. 24; two on Mar. 2; one on six dates between Apr. 4 and 11; one on Apr. 25 and 28 and four on Dec. 14 (many observers).

T Barn Elms Res., one on Jan. 12, Jan. 15, Feb. 8 and Dec. 20 (HPM, ICTN, CAW, DIMW).

#### 53 Shoveler

E Fisher's Green G.P., a pair on June 8 and 14 (JLFP).

M Staines Reservoirs and Perry Oaks districts, between ten and twelve pairs were present here during the breeding season. At least three broods were reared and ducklings in various stages of plumage were recorded, with adults, on many dates between June 15 and Aug. 8 (MPB, RWHH, WNM, ICTN, CAW).

#### 55 Scaup

E King George V Res., a duck which arrived on Dec. 9, 1951, stayed until Mar. 22, 1952 (JLFP, HWR, PFCR).

M Brent Res., a drake on Feb. 22 and a duck on Dec. 3 (EHW, MC). Staines Res., a pair from Feb. 19-24, one on Mar. 9 and a pair on Mar. 12 (JD, AGH, WNM). Single birds were seen on Oct. 12, 26 and 31, four were recorded on Dec. 12 and two on Dec. 26 (JD, HPM, ICTN, DAPP, CAW).

T Barn Elms Res., a drake on Dec. 21 (AWW, SK).

**56 Tufted Duck**

The following recoveries were notified during 1952.

A duck ringed in St. James's Park on 25.2.43 by TLB was recovered in the spring of 1946 on the River Vaga, Nr. Shenkursk, Archangel Province, Russia.

A bird ringed in St. James's Park on 21.12.50 by TLB was shot 30 kilometres south of Leeuwarden, Friesland, Nr. Zuider Zee, Holland, on 14.12.51.

S Kew Gardens, three pairs bred (JWL).

T Barn Elms Res., at least two pairs bred and reared young. Close by at Barnes Village a pair had a brood of eight during early August (EDB, THLM, GLS, AGGT).

**58 Ferruginous Duck**

M Osterley Park and The Aviary, Southall, up to three between Oct. 8 and Oct. 10. A duck observed on Oct. 11 showed the characteristic white on the under tail-coverts (MJA, HPM, WNM, CAW).

S Godstone, a drake on Jan. 3, 16 and 26 and again on Mar. 13. Gatton Park, one on Mar. 10 (HB, AJH, DEP, RHW).

**60 Goldeneye**

E Girling Res., one on Dec. 14 (JLFP). King George V Res., from Oct. 25 until the end of the year single birds and small parties were seen on all week-end visits with a maximum of 12 on Nov. 9 (JLFP, PFCR). King George V Res., 12 on Feb. 24. Walthamstow Res., single birds observed on Jan. 27, Feb. 24 and Apr. 27 (HWR).

H Aldenham Res., one on Nov. 12 and 30 (BLS, EHW).

M Brent Res., one on Nov. 2 and Nov. 13 (PS, EHW). Stoke Newington Res., one bird on Oct. 12 and 14 (JB). Littleton, Queen Mary Res., c. 17 on Jan. 13, single birds on July 20 and Aug. 17, four on Dec. 12 and one on Dec. 14 (RDAC).

Staines Reservoirs, during January, numbers fluctuated between three and a maximum of 20 on Jan. 20. Throughout February numbers continued to rise to 27 on Feb. 23 and fell to c. 10 during early March. Ten birds were seen on Mar. 16 and sixteen were recorded on Apr. 5; although 22 were seen on Apr. 14 and 10 on Apr. 19—the last date recorded. Single birds were seen from Oct. 10 onwards with threes and fives reported during early November, 20 were seen on Nov. 16 and 11 on Nov. 29. On Dec. 12 twelve were recorded, 20 on Dec. 21 (many observers).

K Ruxley G.P., four on Nov. 29 (FJH). Stone Marshes, one on Cotton Farm lake on Feb. 23 and from Mar. 1-31. One bird was recorded from Oct. 11-30 (six observers).

S Island Barn Res., two on Nov. 8, three on Nov. 9 and 16 (DP). Molesey Res., four on Jan. 13 (GCG).

T Barn Elms Res., one was seen on most dates between Oct. 25 and Dec. 2 (many observers).



**61 Long-tailed Duck**

- E King George V Res., one immature duck from Oct. 25 to Nov. 1 (JLFP, HWR, PFCR).
- M Brent Res., one on ten dates between Jan. 13 and Feb. 16 (many observers). Inner London: a female or immature seen on the Thames near Hungerford Bridge by DG on Feb. 7. St. James's Park, one, an immature bird, from Feb. 14-18 and the Round Pond, Kensington Gardens, on Feb. 19 and 20 (TLB *et al.*).
- S Richmond Park, one on the Pen Ponds from Jan. 12-15 (RWHL, DIMW).
- T Barn Elms and Lonsdale Road Reservoirs, two on Jan. 8, although a single bird was recorded by many observers on nine other dates between Jan. 1 and Jan. 20 (c.f. *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 21). Barn Elms Res., an immature on Nov. 30 and Dec. 7 (SK, GLS).

**62 Velvet Scoter**

- M Staines Res., an immature drake on Jan. 6 (DIMW).
- T Barn Elms Res., one on Feb. 10 (CED).

**64 Common Scoter**

- E King George V Res., two on Nov. 8 (JLFP). Nazeing, one frequented a gravel pit from Apr. 14 to May 18 (WM, JLFP, LW).
- M Littleton, Queen Mary Res., one on Nov. 16 (rdac). Staines Res., three from Apr. 11-14, one on Apr. 19 and three on Apr. 20 (WNM, ICTN, DAP, CAW). One on Dec. 12 and 13 (ICTN).
- S Molesey Res., one on Mar. 23 (RCH).

**70 Goosander**

- Correction; *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 21. Under S substitute Walton Res. for Island Barn Res. in the first line.
- E King George V Res., two on Jan. 13, four on Feb. 9. From Feb. 10 until Mar. 15 counts at weekly intervals revealed *c.* 12. Six were seen on Mar. 23, five on Mar. 29 and a single drake on Apr. 12 and 13 (ERP, JLFP, HWR, FFCR). Walthamstow Res., one on Nov. 16 (WCD).
- H Old Parkbury, five on Dec. 14 and three on Dec. 18 (RCL, scl, EHW). This is the first record for this gravel pit.
- M Brent Res., four on Nov. 29 (AG, JCL). Kempton Res., one on Jan. 27 and two on Feb. 9 (GCG). Littleton, Queen Mary Res., present from January until Mar. 23 with a maximum of 27 on Jan. 27. During the period Nov. 16 to Dec. 14 the same maximum was obtained on Dec. 12 (many observers). Staines Reservoirs, a maximum of 20 birds was recorded on Jan. 3 and Feb. 12. A drake was seen on Apr. 5 and two "redheads" stayed until Apr. 25. During the second part of the year birds were recorded from Nov. 3 onwards with a maximum of 36 on Dec. 12 (many observers).

- S Island Barn Res., two on Jan. 27, 15 on Mar. 23, two on Nov. 8, four on Nov. 9, five on Nov. 16 and four on Dec. 14 (DP *et al.*). Kew, a drake on the river, Mar. 6 (JWL). Molesey Lock, up to 20 from January to Apr. 9 (RCHG). Walton G.P., two on Feb. 3 (RCHG). Walton and Molesey Res., 71 on Jan. 13, 102 on Jan. 27, 84 on Feb. 24, *c.* 80 on Mar. 1, 57 still present on Mar. 23 (GCC).  
 T Barn Elms Res., a maximum of 21 on Feb. 17 and Feb. 23. From the beginning of December numbers rose steadily to 47 on Dec. 20 (many observers).

### 71 Smew

- E King George V Res., up to five during January, February and March. From mid-December numbers rose from 12 to a maximum of 26 on Dec. 28. Walthamstow Res., one on Jan. 27, five on Feb. 3 and seven on Feb. 24 (WCD, JLFP, PFCR).  
 H Aldenham Res., three on Nov. 16 (EHW).  
 M Again recorded from most of the reservoirs and open sheets of water with a maximum of 72 at Brent Reservoir on Feb. 16 (many observers). Perry Oaks S.F., two red-headed birds on Nov. 30—the first record for this locality (CAW).  
 Inner London: Hyde Park, one on the Serpentine on six dates between Jan. 28 and Feb. 15 (CHH, RWHN, HCH, H, CHFP). Regent's Park, one on Feb. 13 (HCH).  
 S Molesey Res., nine on Mar. 1 and one on Dec. 14 (GCC). Walton G.P., three on Feb. 9, four on Mar. 9, five on Mar. 16, one on Dec. 14 and three on Dec. 26 (DP, RCHG).  
 T Barn Elms Res., a maximum of 23 was recorded on Jan. 27 (LB), there were 25 on Dec. 21 (CLS).

### 73 Shelduck

- E Rainham, during the spring months four were regularly seen here and on June 1 there were five (RS). Walthamstow Res., two on Feb. 24 and 25 (WCD).  
 M Littleton, Queen Mary Res., three on Mar. 23 (RWHN, CMV). Staines Res., eight on Jan. 13 and one on Mar. 23, Apr. 9 and May 7. Perry Oaks S.F., two on Aug. 20 (MJA, AEE, GCG, ICTN, WNM, CAW).  
 K Dartford Marshes, one on June 29 (JFB). Swanscombe, four flushed from creek mouth on June 17 (KHP). These are the only records for this stretch of the Thames.  
 S Island Barn Res., three on Mar. 23 (DP). Walton G.P., two on Jan. 20 (RCHG).

### 75/78 Grey Geese (species not determined)

Correction: *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 18. The Stanwell and Staines records refer to birds seen on Dec. 30.

- E Havering, a flock of 67 flew low over Bedford Park in a north-westerly direction on Dec. 6 (RBW). Hornchurch, a flock of 21 was seen flying over on Dec. 21 (BWB).

- H Near Hertford, flock of four passing over on Dec. 20 (RSY).
- M Neasden, eight flew over on Jan. 4 (REJ). Staines Moor and King George VI Res., a flock of c. 60 birds was seen at both places on Feb. 3 (JFWB, RWHH, ECO).  
Inner London: over 100 flying E by N over Kensington at 2.30 p.m. on Mar. 9, possibly White-fronts (H).
- K Beckenham, six birds flew low over the houses in an easterly direction on Dec. 19 (GEM).
- T Barn Elms Res., 20, flying north on Jan. 5 (NFMB), seven flying over in a south-westerly direction on Jan. 27 (JFWB, GT).

### 78 White-fronted Goose

- S Walton Res., a flock of seven settled on the water in the early afternoon of Mar. 1 (GCG).

### 91 Buzzard

A Buzzard, which later escaped, was picked up at South Mimms, Herts., in December by Dr. McNeill Love.

Other reports are as follows:—

- E Loughton, one seen circling overhead on May 17 (CEB).
- H Barnet, one on Apr. 27 (BLS).
- M Colindale, one seen on Aug. 4 (WES). Hampstead Heath, one seen on Sept. 16 (JFWB, GT). West Hampstead, one on Feb. 18 (WS). Stanmore, one seen circling above Bentley Priory on Nov. 11 (MB).
- K Ruxley G.P., one circling and sailing away in a S.E. direction on Aug. 24 (FJH).

### 100/102 Hen Harrier/Montagu's Harrier

- M Stanmore Common, one on May 23 (EHW). From the description received this was possibly an immature female Montagu's Harrier.

### 103 Osprey

- H Moor Mill, one seen beating low over the water on May 11 (JCT).
- B/M/S There seem to have been two Ospreys in the Staines district during April and May and one in the autumn. The first bird, which was seen flying in a south-westerly direction, was observed on Apr. 14 at Stanwell carrying a fish (ICTN). A second bird, in a more adult state of plumage showing black carpal patches and a nearly white tail, was observed ranging the Staines Reservoirs, Poyle Pits and well into the county of Buckinghamshire on eight dates between Apr. 29 and June 1. A third bird, first observed on Aug. 20 at Staines and again during the nine-day period Sept. 11-19 was recognisable by lacking a wing feather. This bird wandered within a five mile radius, being seen at Colnbrook (Bucks.), Staines (Middx.), and Egham (Surrey) by at least seven observers.

**104 Hobby**

H Radlett, one seen chasing House Martins on Apr. 22 (EHW).

M Single birds were reported from the Staines, Perry Oaks and Heathrow districts on sixteen dates between July 12 and Sept. 28 (seven observers).

K Stone Marshes, one seen flying against a strong S.W. wind on June 1 (GB).

**105 Peregrine**

E Upminster, one on Oct. 30 (BH).

H Aldenham Res., one seen on Feb. 6 (BLS).

M Staines Res., one seen in flight on Jan. 5 (ICTN). Perry Oaks S.F., a tiercel seen on Dec. 14 (HPM). Inner London: St. John's Wood, two on Mar. 18 and one on Oct. 11 (HCH).

K Stone Marshes, an immature bird observed harrying a flock of Starlings on Nov. 23 (WIB).

**107 Merlin**

H Aldenham, a female on Apr. 20 (EHW). Hamper Mill, one seen on Sept. 9 (EHW).

M Mill Hill Golf Course, a male seen on Apr. 7 (AFD). Perry Oaks S.F., single birds seen on Apr. 11, Aug. 31, Sept. 1, and Sept. 7 (DG, ICTN, CMV). Staines Moor, one on Dec. 12 (ICTN).

S Epsom S.F., one on Sept. 7 (HPM). Lonsdale Road Res., one on Dec. 13 (HPM).

**110 Kestrel**

M Inner London, a pair reared one young in a crevice on the façade of the Savoy Hotel (MRB, PR, WGT). A pair nested unsuccessfully at St. Paul's School, Hammersmith (AM-J). No proof of nesting elsewhere is available, although at least another five pairs were present in the breeding season.

**115 Red-legged Partridge**

Again reported as a breeding species from most of the agricultural districts. In Essex the species appear to be well established in the Lambourne End district, in parts of Epping Forest and in the Lea and Roding valleys. (See *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 31). In Hertfordshire the bird is most frequently recorded from the London Colney district, where, at Old Parkbury on Aug. 3, six adults with 15 young were seen. Middlesex records indicate breeding, or probable breeding, at Harefield, Harlington, Hayes and Mill Hill but in no place is this species as well established as in the Essex and Herts. localities. In Kent the main stronghold is along the Thames marshes between Abbey Wood and Northfleet. At Stone, 27 were counted on manure heaps on Oct. 26 and others heard calling nearby. In Surrey, breeding was confirmed at Chessington whilst other records came from Ham and Wisley.

**116 Partridge**

M Inner London: Regent's Park, one seen on one of the islands on Mar. 31 after a heavy snowstorm (EHW).







**117 Quail**

- M Perry Oaks S.F., one heard calling on July 13 (AGGT), one was flushed on July 16 (ICTN). One on Sept. 20 (MFBB). Staines Moor, one heard calling on June 22 (RWHN, HPM, CAW, *et al.*).
- K Dartford Marshes, one or two calling on six dates between June 2 and 13. Horton Wood, one heard calling from a cornfield on July 5. Magpie Bottom, between Eynsford and Shoreham, one heard calling on July 6 (JFB, WIB, KHH, KHP).

**118 Pheasant**

- M Inner London: Battersea Park, one stayed throughout most of April (JNAE). Kensington Gardens, one on Apr. 30 (MSD). Holborn, a picture of one on a bombed site appeared in the *Daily Mail* for 28.iii.52.

**120 Water Rail**

- E Rainham, Berwick Pond, one on Jan. 5 (BH).
- H Moor Mill, one on Apr. 14 was the first seen for a long time (EHW).
- M Brent Res., one on Nov. 9 (AFD). Hampstead Heath, one on Feb. 20, Dec. 8 and 11 (GT). Hayes, one on Dec. 13 (EE). Mill Hill, one on the golf course pond from Mar. 11-Apr. 15 (PELS, EHW). Ruislip, one on Oct. 4, 5 and 8 (CB, TLB). Southall, one on Oct. 3 (JMA). Staines Moor, one on Mar. 29 (HCH, DIMW). Uxbridge, one on Feb. 17 (REJ).
- K Ruxley G.P., one on Jan. 13, Mar. 1, Apr. 10 and Nov. 2 (DME, FJH). Stone Marshes, two on Dec. 23 (KHP).
- S Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 31, Nov. 23 and 28 (DAC, AFM, BSM). Walton G.P., one on Mar. 22 (RCHG).

**125 Corncrake**

- E Pilgrim's Hatch, near Brentwood, one found dead beneath telegraph wires on Sept. 4 (GAP).
- M Hayes, one on Aug. 20 (EE).
- S Beddington S.F., one flushed from a meadow by two dogs on Sept. 6 (BSM).

**131 Oystercatcher**

- M Staines Reservoirs, one on May 24 (AG, DAP).
- K Stone Marshes, one in flight on Mar. 15 (KHP), two on Nov. 29 (FJH).
- T Barn Elms Res., nine on Mar. 19 (JI, FILM).

**134 Ringed Plover**

- E Rainham Marshes, three on May 17 (BH, RS). King George V Res., seven on Aug. 7 (PFCR). Romford S.F., three from Sept. 2-4 (RS). West Thurrock Marsh, nine on Oct. 5 (MJA).
- M Perry Oaks S.F. and Staines Res., one at each place on Mar. 23 (BPP, CAW). Perry Oaks S.F., five were recorded on Apr. 12, one on Apr. 13. During May a party of 15 was seen on May 10 which increased to 18 on May 11. A flock of 40 was reported for May 31 and 51 were present on June 1 and 2 (PJKB, AG, BPP, NHP, CAW).

The autumn migration here was more spectacular. Three birds arrived on July 6, six were seen on July 7. From then until Aug. 1 two or three birds were seen on fifteen dates. Numbers rose to eight on Aug. 2 and increased by about ten daily until Aug. 10 when a flock of 60 was reported. Parties fluctuated between 40 and 50 during the next ten days and between 10 and 25 from Aug. 22 to Sept. 14. From Sept. 15 until the end of the month one to six birds were observed on five dates only. A flock of *c.* 20 was seen on Oct. 2, 19 on Oct. 4 and 21 on Oct. 5, five on Oct. 8, two on Oct. 11, 12, 15 and 26 (ICTN *et al.*).

Ponders End S.F., one on Sept. 13-14 (JLFP). Staines Reservoirs, one, Aug. 24, 11 on Aug. 31, 20 on Sept. 1 and 21 birds on Sept. 4 (many observers). One winter record; Enfield, one on Dec. 1 (JFD).

- K On the Thames Marshes, one was seen at Stone on Mar. 15 and two at Swanscombe on Apr. 11. Four were recorded from Dartford on June 4. The autumn migration observed between Dartford and Swanscombe was heavier than in previous years and lasted from July 26 until late October with 34 at Stone on September 19 and 25 birds on the mud-flats at Swanscombe on Oct. 26 (GB, JFB, WIB, KHP).
- S Hersham S.F., three on Apr. 20 (DP). Beddington S.F., two on Aug. 12 (LBE). Esher S.F., three on Sept. 6 (BFW). Walton Heath, two flushed from the edge of a stubble field on Sept. 28 (EMH).

### 135 Little Ringed Plover

The Little Ringed Plover continued to increase and spread in the Area in 1952, although several of its established haunts had become unsuitable. Fifteen pairs are known to have nested (see *L.B.R.* 16, p. 28, for figures of all previous years). The first arrival, March 23rd, and the last autumn date, October 12th, are new records for the Area.

- E Despite the filling of the William Girling Reservoir (where up to six pairs nested annually from 1947-1951) at least seven pairs of Little Ringed Plovers nested in Essex in 1952. The first arrival was on the bank of the Reservoir on March 23rd (ERF). Subsequently, JLFP was able to prove the breeding of seven pairs, with the probability of two more, at four sites in the Lea valley and J. Shippey found a nest at a gravel pit in another part of Essex. A complete watch was not kept at all the nests but 20 chicks are known to have hatched. Banbury Res., two on Apr. 20 (HWR).
- H One at a gravel pit on July 20 and 30, August 1, 3, 4, and 27 and October 12 (WDM, EHW).
- M No nests were found this year: three of the 'traditional' gravel pits have become unsuitable; another, which held four pairs in 1951, was only visited in April, when two birds were seen displaying. As in previous years, a pair bred on London Airport and appear to have reared three young successfully (ICTN *et al.*).
- K A pair successfully reared at least one young at the gravel pit where, in 1947, breeding was first proved in Kent (FJH *et al.*).

There is no evidence of breeding in any of the intervening years and the behaviour (e.g., injury feigning) of the 1952 birds was different from that of the previous pair. Four pairs nested at another site in North Kent; this site has not been recorded before but at least three pairs frequented it in 1951 (WJI).

S Wimbledon Common, on April 20 one was seen on an open ploughed field fringed with pools of water on the outskirts of the common—less than seven miles from Hyde Park Corner! On April 29, two displaying birds were present and on May 10 a scrape was found. When next visited on May 17, however, the area was found to have been ploughed up and no birds were seen (IJC). One was seen at Guildford S.F. on May 16 (HB) and at another sewage farm a pair nested but on May 30 the four eggs were found smashed (DP).

### 139 Grey Plover

M Perry Oaks S.F., four on Sept. 28 (DAP, RHMR, GLS).

### 140 Golden Plover

E Abridge, *c.* 20 on Feb. 10 and one on Mar. 27 (BWB, RMP). Bulphan Fen, 12-14 on Nov. 29 (RBW). Fairlop district, a flock of *c.* 100 during January and February (MRC). Hornchurch, seven on Feb. 27 (BWB). Sewardstone, small parties were seen between mid-January and early February with a maximum of 18 on Jan. 20 (FPCR).

H Colney Street district, again recorded in considerable numbers. A flock of 250 at Old Parkbury on Jan. 2 had increased to 480 birds by Jan. 20 and 150 were still present on Mar. 16. During the latter part of the year six were seen at Old Parkbury on Sept. 13. During early November flocks here numbered between 90 and 150. At Shenleybury, 300 were observed on Nov. 7 and 23 (rdl, scl, EHW).

M Brent Res., 25 on Nov. 8 (JFWB). Hendon, 16 on Nov. 16, 30 and Dec. 2 (EHW). In the Staines, Stanwell and London Airport district ones and twos were seen from January until the end of Mar., with a flock of 10 at Staines Moor on Jan. 20 and a flock of 18 at King George VI Res. on Jan. 27. Autumn and winter occurrences were mainly of single birds although at Staines Moor a flock of 15 was seen on Nov. 30 and another of 18 on Dec. 21 (many observers).

K Stone Marshes, four on the tide-line on Dec. 9 (CD).

S Beddington S.F., up to four birds between Jan. 26 and Feb. 24, one from Apr. 2-9. One or two from Nov. 16-27 and seven birds on Nov. 30 (BPA, BSM, *et al.*).

### 143 Turnstone

Correction: *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 24; for May 12 read May 15 for the Perry Oaks S.F. record.

M Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 10 and 11 (five observers). Between Aug. 7 and Aug. 14 up to six birds were seen almost daily. Solitary birds were reported daily from Aug. 15 until Aug. 27, five on Oct. 10. Staines Res., one on Aug. 31 (many observers).

K Stone Marshes, one on Sept. 16 (KHP).

**145 Snipe**

No breeding records have been received although nesting was suspected at Moor Mill, Herts.; Staines Moor, Middx., and on the Abbey Wood and Swanscombe Marshes in Kent.

**147 Jack Snipe**

- E Barking, one on Ripple Level on Jan. 5. Hainault Forest, two beside the lake on Oct. 12. Roding Valley, one on Oct. 11 (MRC, TD, MDW).  
 H Old Parkbury, two on Jan. 27 and one on Apr. 1 and Dec. 14 (WDM, EHW). Moor Mill, two on Nov. 2 (RCL, SCL). Stocker's Lake, two on Feb. 16 (NHP). Watford S.F., six on Feb. 3, one, Mar. 16 and two on Dec. 21 (REJ, NHP).  
 M Brent Res., one on Mar. 2, Oct. 7 and 12, and Nov. 3 (AG, EHW). Hampstead Heath, one on Jan. 1 and 12, and Feb. 17 (JFWB, PWD). Perry Oaks S.F., two on Jan. 11, one, Mar. 29-30 and one on Nov. 17 (AJH, HCH, FHJ). Ponders End S.F., one on Mar. 8 (JLFP). Staines Moor, one on Mar. 16, and on Apr. 10 (HGH, DEP).  
 K Abbey Wood Marshes, one on Jan. 17 (JFB). Elmers End S.F., five on Feb. 9 and single birds on many dates from mid-October to the end of the year (JJC, GEM). Dartford Marshes, three on Nov. 9 and one on Dec. 6 (JFB, FJH, KHH). Ruxley G.P., one, Feb. 10 and one from Dec. 6 to the end of the year (FJH). Stone Marshes, one seen regularly from Nov. 29 until Dec. 23 (KHP).  
 S Beddington S.F., one on Mar. 5, one to three from Oct. 4-31, one only from Nov. 26-30 (AFM, BSM). Godstone, one on Jan. 16 (AJH). Richmond Park, one on Mar. 30 (RWHN).

**148 Woodcock**

- E Hainault Forest, one on Mar. 22 and Apr. 2 (MRC).  
 H Cuffley Great Wood, one on Jan. 29 (BLS). Totteridge, one on Dec. 7 (EHW).  
 M Hampstead Heath, one on Mar. 18, two on Mar. 23 and Apr. 3, one on Nov. 23 (JFWB, KES, GT). Ruislip, Copse Wood, one was seen roding during early April. At Poors Field two or three birds were seen on May 6 (TLB, JD, BPP). Wood Green, one picked up and later released on Mar. 21 (ERP).  
 K Greenwich Park, one on Nov. 13 (WGT). Lullingstone Park, two on Dec. 19 (CD). Orpington, one in Crofton Woods on Dec. 1 (AHB). Stone Marshes, party of six flying east in thick fog on Dec. 6 (KHP).  
 S Ashstead, at least one pair bred (HH). The observer believes several pairs breed in this district annually. Addington, three on Nov. 9 (HEP). Banstead, one on Sept. 16 (HB). Bookham, two in Eastern Wood on Mar 9 (GB). Cobham, single birds seen in this district on May 27, June 3 and 27 (JF). Dulwich, one on Apr. 3 and Dec. 21 (OCL, ISS). Selsdon Wood, one on Jan. 9 (AJH). Wimbledon Common, one on Apr. 13 (SK).  
 T Barn Elms Res., one on Nov. 8 (AGGT).  
 T/M Lonsdale Road Res., a bird which rose from the reservoir bank and flew across the river, pitched down behind some trees in Chiswick, Feb. 23 (JJC, GEM)



**150 Curlew**

Numerous records have been received of solitary birds and small parties from many parts of the Area. A flock of 34 was seen at Staines, King George VI Res., on Aug. 17 (CAW).

**151 Whimbrel**

M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 23 (RSH, FHJ). Staines Res., one on Aug. 23 and 31 (HPM, ICTN).

K Dartford Marshes, one on Aug. 14 (WIB). Stone Marshes, one on Aug. 30 (GB).

S Tadworth, calling birds passed overhead on the night of May 13 (HB). Thornton Heath, one flying south, calling, on Aug. 29 (LP).

**154 Black-tailed Godwit**

M Perry Oaks S.F., four on June 29. One bird was recorded here from July 19-28. Six were seen on Aug. 10, two on Aug. 11 and 12, four Aug. 13, one Aug. 14 and 23 and Sept. 12. Staines Res., one on July 20 (nine observers).

S Richmond Park, one on Mar. 30 (RWHU) constituted the first record for the Park. Beddington S.F., two on Aug. 22 (BPA).

**155 Bar-tailed Godwit**

M Brent Res., one on Sept. 10 (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 3 (DAP). Staines Moor, two on Sept. 11 (EHW).

**156 Green Sandpiper**

During the spring passage many single birds were recorded from widely separated parts of the Area between Apr. 9 and May 18. The autumn passage from early July until the first week of November, appeared to reach its maximum during the second and third weeks of August with many single birds and small parties of up to three being recorded. Birds were reported during the winter months from Essex at the Girling and King George V Reservoirs; from Herts. at Moor Mill; from Middlesex at Perry Oaks, Ruislip Lido, Staines Reservoirs and Staines Moor; from Kent at Stone Marshes and from Surrey at Chessington, Egham, Epsom S.F., Esher S.F., and Hersham S.F.

**157 Wood Sandpiper**

Correction: *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 26; delete the Herts. record for July 2.

H Aldenham Res., one on Aug. 29. Old Parkbury, one on Aug. 4 and Sept. 20 (EHW).

M Perry Oaks S.F., at least four on July 4. On the next day the flock had increased to 10—the maximum number for July. Small parties of up to six were seen from then until July 17. A second wave of migrants was heralded by a single bird on Aug. 10, with numbers building up to six on Aug. 17. On Aug. 18 at least 17

were present (ICTN) and numbers did not fall below eight until after Aug. 28 with a sudden drop to one on Aug. 31. During September two frequented the sludge from Sept. 13-21. Three were seen on Sept. 27, one on Sept. 28, one on Oct. 4 and two on Oct. 5—the last date of the autumn passage. This summary has been compiled from the records of fifteen observers. Ponders End S.F., one on Aug. 2 and Aug. 20 (JLFP, PFCR). Poyle G.P., two on July 13 (AGGT). Southall, one on July 16 (MJA). Staines. King George VI Res., one on Aug. 24 (HPM, ICTN).

K Stone Marshes, one on Aug. 23 (WIB).

S Beddington S.F., up to two birds Aug. 16-25 (BPA, AFM, BSM). One on Sept. 3 (LBE). Esher S.F., one on Aug. 10 (DP).

### 159 Common Sandpiper

The *spring* passage of small parties or solitary birds was apparent from early April until the third week of May.

The *autumn* movement lasted from July 4 until the second week of October with the migration reaching its peak during the second and third weeks of August, when parties of 35 were recorded in the Lea Valley and at Perry Oaks Sewage Farm on Aug. 17.

*Winter Records:* Stone Marshes, one bird was seen regularly from January to the end of March and also from October to the end of the year. Littleton, Queen Mary Res., two were seen on Jan. 20, and again on November 2, 16, and 22, two were also present on Dec. 12. Moor Mill, one on Dec. 21. (See *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 26).

H Old Parkbury, a pair again showed breeding behaviour during May but left by the middle of June (RCI, SCI, EHW). (See *L.B.R.*, 15, 16).

### 162 Spotted Redshank

E King George V Res., one on Aug. 22 (JLFP).

M Perry Oaks S.F., three on Aug. 17 (HSHH). Two were reported on Sept. 16, and three or four on ten dates between Sept. 17 and Sept. 29. From the week-end and mid-week observations recorded, it appears that four or five birds stayed from early October until the 22nd—the last autumn date for this species in the Area (many observers). Staines Moor, three on Sept. 13 and one on Sept. 16 (PJH, WNM). Staines Res., five on Oct. 7 and one on Oct. 11 (JD, RSH). Staines, King George VI Res., four on Oct. 4 (HPM).

### 165 Greenshank

E Hainault Forest, one stayed from Sept. 6-28, frequenting the edge of the lake and feeding on small fish left stranded in the shallows (MRC, MDW). Nazeing, one on Aug. 17 (JLFP).

M Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 31 (CAW). The main autumn passage lasted from Aug. 14-21 with a maximum of eight birds on Aug. 16 and 17. Three were reported on Aug. 27. Single birds were present on Aug. 31, Sept. 6, Sept. 7 and two were seen on Sept. 12. In the Staines Reservoirs and Moor district, six were seen on Aug. 17, one on Aug. 23, at least six on Aug. 24, two on Aug. 29, six on Aug.

30 and one on Aug. 31. During September single birds were seen on Sept. 4, 13 and 18 (many observers).

S Beddington S.F., two on Aug. 31 (BSM). Esher S.F., three on Aug. 10; Molesey S.F., eight on Aug. 17 (DP).

T Barn Elms Res., one on May 7 (AGGT). One from Aug. 23-30 and again on Sept. 1 (HCH, THLM *et al.*).

#### 169 Knot

M Perry Oaks S.F., one from July 12 to 19 (ICTN *et al.*). Single birds were also seen here on Aug. 3-4 and on Oct. 4 (eight observers). Staines Res., one on Oct. 14 (JD).

K Dartford Marshes, a flock of 8-10 was seen along the foreshore on Dec. 6 (FJH).

#### 171 Little Stint

E Broxbourne, (within the county boundary) two at a gravel pit on May 25 (JLFP).

M Perry Oaks S.F., three birds from Aug. 2-5 after which date one or two were present until Sept. 21 with an increase to four on Sept. 11, 12 and 13. Three were seen on Oct. 4 and on Oct. 5 and one on Oct. 8 (many observers). Staines Res., one on Sept. 14 (HPM, GLS).

K Stone Marshes, two from Sept. 16-25 (WIB, FJH, KHP).

#### 176 Pectoral Sandpiper

S Epsom, a solitary bird frequented a rubbish tip pool from Sept. 1-7. On Sept. 2 the bird was trapped and ringed by ICTN, possibly the second bird ringed in this country—the first having been ringed at Abberton, Essex, on Aug. 26 (see Essex Bird Watching & Pres. Soc. Report for 1952, p. 16). Full plumage details were taken (JAB, PJH, ICTN, AWW).

#### 178 Dunlin

E Waltham Abbey, one on Apr. 27 (DHR). Romford S.F., one on Sept. 14 (RS).

M Brent Res., one on July 13. Mill Hill, several heard flying over on the night of Nov. 23 (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., two on Jan. 2 and Jan. 12 (WNM., CMV). Two April records; 20 on Apr. 11 and eight on Apr. 13. During May four were seen on May 10, seven on May 11 and six on May 31. Six birds were seen on June 1, eight on June 2, and two on June 4. During the main autumn passage, which lasted from early July until October, numbers fluctuated almost hourly and on some days from three to fourteen were recorded at different times. The maximum monthly figures are as follows:—11 on July 30; 34 on Aug. 15; 29 on Sept. 4, and a party of 22 on Oct. 5. Three were seen on Nov. 2 and one on Nov. 5 (many observers). Ruislip Lido, one on Nov. 15 (NHP). At Staines reservoirs a solitary bird was seen on Apr. 20. Parties, reaching a maximum of nine on July 13 and 20, were seen on six dates between July 13 and Oct. 4.

- K Stone Marshes, one on Jan. 13, with other waders on the jetty. Passage was observed between July 20 and Oct. 5 with a maximum of 14 on Sept. 19. Five on Nov. 23 and one on Dec. 23 (GB, WIB, KHP).  
 S Hersham S.F., one on Apr. 20 (DP). Beddington S.F., one unable to fly was caught on Oct. 19 and released, fully recovered, two days later (AFM, BSM). Molesey, one on Aug. 17 (DP).  
 T Barn Elms Res., two on July 13; 16 on Sept. 10 (LBL, FJLM, AGGT).

#### 179 Curlew Sandpiper

- M Perry Oaks S.F., one on July 12 and from Aug. 16-20. On nineteen days between Sept. 1 and Sept. 29 small parties of up to three birds were reported with a max. of four on Sept. 17. On Oct. 4-5 there were three birds present and one was seen on Oct. 7 and 11 (many observers).  
 K Stone Marshes, two from Sept. 17 to 23 (WIB, FJH, KHP).  
 S Beddington S.F., one on the sludge beds on Aug. 31 (BSM).

#### 181 Sanderling

- M Perry Oaks S.F., four on May 11 and three on May 31. Three on June 1 and one, June 4. One on July 19, 28, Aug. 3 and 10, four on Aug. 11 and two on Sept. 1 (many observers). Staines, King George VI Res., one on June 2 (BPP).

#### 184 Ruff

- Correction: *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 26, line 1. The Surrey record, Sept. 9, refers to a bird seen at Molesey S.F.  
 E Romford S.F., one on Aug. 27 (RS).  
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one spring record, a single bird on Apr. 13 (AGH, WNM). Autumn passage here commenced with the arrival of seven birds, three in summer plumage, on July 4. Five were seen on July 5 and two on July 6 and one for the three following days. One was recorded daily from July 27 until Aug. 3 when six were present. The maximum autumn number of 14 was recorded on Aug. 5 from which date until the second week of September up to five birds were observed. A second minor movement appears to have occurred between Sept. 18 and Sept. 21 with four to six birds on the farm. During the next month three birds were seen on Oct. 4, three on Oct. 11 and four on Oct. 12 (fifteen observers). Ponders End S.F., one from Aug. 25-27 (JLFP, PFCR). Staines Moor, one on Sept. 15 (EHW).  
 K Stone Marshes, one from Sept. 16-18 (WIB, KHP).  
 S Beddington S.F., two birds, Aug. 23-24 (BPA, AFM).

#### 185 Avocet

- K/E Stone Marshes, one frequented the Littlebrook Power Station pools and the nearby tide-line from Dec. 22 until the end of the year. On several occasions, when disturbed, it was seen to alight on the Essex shore of the Thames (JFB, KHH, KHP).

#### 187 Grey Phalarope

- M Staines Res., two in winter plumage on Oct. 4 (JD, GCG, FHJ, HPM, DAP).

**189 Stone Curlew**

- E Hainault, one on Apr. 27 (ps).  
 M/E Pnders End S.F., one flushed on July 19, flew over the county boundary to alight on the banks of the Girling reservoir (JLFP).  
 M Inner London: Kilburn Grange Park, one picked up in a children's sand pit on Aug. 9 was taken to the Zoo on the following day (CJL, JJY). This is the first record for Inner London.  
 S Richmond Park, one heard calling after dark on Mar. 16 (AFK).

**199 Lesser Black-backed Gull**

- M Staines Moor and King George VI Res., c. 85 on July 17; c. 520 on July 22; c. 310 on July 24; c. 140 on July 31 and c. 90 on Aug. 8 (ICTN). Harefield, 110 on Sept. 21 (NHP).

**200 Herring Gull**

- Highest number recorded was 500 at Maple Cross, Herts., on Jan. 13 (HFG).

**202 Glaucous Gull**

- M Perry Oaks S.F., one immature bird on Apr. 1, 1951 (FHJ). Staines Res., one, probably a third winter bird, on Feb. 6, 1951 (NGBJ, JDW).  
 T Barn Elms Res., an adult on Jan. 12 (AG, CAW).

**207 Little Gull**

- E King George V Res., two on Aug. 21 (JLFP).  
 M Brent Res., one on Oct. 7 (EHW). Staines Reservoirs, two immature birds on Sept. 15 and 16, one on the following dates: Sept. 18-21 and 26-28. During October single birds were seen on Oct. 4, 11 and two on Oct. 14. One was recorded on Nov. 8 (many observers).  
 T Barn Elms Res., single birds were reported on Sept. 16 and 17, from Sept. 20-22 and on Oct. 18 and 19 (LBL, HPM, AGCT *et al.*).

**208 Black-headed Gull**

- M Inner London: Trafalgar Square, one alighted to feed with the pigeons on Dec. 23 (sc).  
 The Perry Oaks S.F. colony stood at 192 nests on May 18. One field was later robbed with the result that the final figure was much the same as the figure of 158 recorded for 1950, and was considerably less than the 240 counted in 1951 (CAW). A dead bird found by HPM at Perry Oaks S.F. on July 5 had been ringed as young in E. Holstein, Germany, on June 17, 1950.  
 At Westminster Bridge, on Mar. 4, TLB found a dead bird which had been ringed as young at Plön, Schleswig Holstein, Germany, on June 28, 1950.  
 The following selected recoveries of birds ringed in the London Area were notified during 1952:—

<i>Date and place of ringing.</i>	<i>Date and place of recovery.</i>
1.iii.44—St. James's Park (TLB) .....	
21.iii.52—Hamburg, Germany, trapped and released.	

- 16.i.51—Tower Bridge (HBF) .....  
                   -.iv.52—Horsens Fjord, Denmark, found dead.  
 1.xii.51—Molesey Res. (RCH) .....  
                   29.ii.52—Stakroge Jylland, Denmark, found dead.  
 4.xii.51—St. James's Park (TLB) .....  
                   11.ii.52—Woodford, Essex, found dead.

**211. Kittiwake**

- M Staines Res., an immature on Sept. 18 (CJRT). Staines, King George VI Res., one immature on the afternoon of Nov. 9 when two others were found dead (PJKB, CAW).  
 Inner London: St. James's Park, an adult on Jan. 11 (AJHY, WGT).  
 K Stone Marshes, one slightly oiled immature bird from July 25 until Aug. 4 (GB).

**212 Black Tern**

- E King George V Res., eight on May 3, one on Aug. 16, three on Aug. 17 (JLFP, PFCR).  
 H Aldenham Res., one on May 2. Old Parkbury, 15 on Apr. 30 (Rcl, scl, EHW).  
 M Brent Res., one in winter plumage on Oct. 19 (AG, PS, MGR). Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 11 (GCG). Staines Reservoirs, one on Apr. 27 and 28; 15 on Apr. 29; one on Apr. 30 and May 1; 30 on May 2; two on May 3 and one on May 10 and 20. During the autumn, one was seen on Aug. 17, four on Sept. 14 and one on Sept. 20 and 21 (L.B. GMC, HPM, PGS *et al.*).  
 K Dartford Marshes, 17 with Common/Arctic Terns flying up-river at low tide on Aug. 17 (JFB, WIB, DG, KHP).  
 S Walton G.P., one on Apr. 27 (KPK).  
 T Barn Elms Res., one on Apr. 30. One or two daily from Aug. 19-24, one on Sept. 10 (MC, HCH, LBL, AGGT, AWW).

**217/218 Common/Arctic Tern**

Apart from a flock of 304 birds at Staines Reservoir on Apr. 28 and a party of 23 on Apr. 30 (AJH, BPP) no heavy movement was recorded during the spring migration. On the autumn passage the maximum of 17 was recorded at Staines Reservoir on Aug. 17 and 14 were seen at Stone Marshes on the same date (FHL, JFB *et al.*).

**223 Sandwich Tern**

- E King George V Res., one on Aug. 21, five on Sept. 13 (JLFP, HWR).  
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one adult on Aug. 1. Staines Reservoirs, four on July 4, one on July 5 and Sept. 11 (AG, PJH, ICTN).  
 T Barn Elms Res., one on Sept. 14 (FJLM).

**232 Stock Dove**

- M Inner London: Battersea Park, one pair nested and two other pairs probably did so (JNAR); Regent's Park, one pair nested (EHW). These are the first breeding records for these localities. Birds bred in Kensington Gardens and were seen in the breeding season in the Green Park and Holland Park.

**234 Woodpigeon**

M Inner London: at least two pairs were known to have nested on buildings, one on the Mansion House and the other on Caxton House, S.W.1 (CT, RBW).

**241 Barn Owl**

H Goffs Oak, one pair bred successfully (HL).

K Elmers End S.F., a pair seen throughout the year and suspected of breeding near by (GEM).

**249 Short-eared Owl**

H Aldenham Wood, one on May 30 (EHW).

S Beddington S.F. and Mitcham Common, up to three birds were seen from Nov. 15 to the end of the year (many observers). Epsom Common, one being mobbed by Jays on Dec. 8 (PS).

**252 Nightjar**

E Epping Forest, two pairs nested (CEB).

K Although heard at Darenth and Joyden's Woods during the breeding season, nesting was not proved. Absent this year from the Hayes locality (GB, WIB, KHH, KHP, GEM).

S No positive nesting records received although birds were seen and heard during the breeding season at Ashted and Epsom Commons, Esher Common, Ham Common, Headley Heath, Limpsfield Chart and Oxshott (GMC, JF, HH, FRM, DEP, BFW).

**261 Hoopoe**

M Staines, one on Apr. 18 and 19 (CJD, RAF).

K Near Otford, one seen on the downs on Apr. 17 (PBC). See *K.B.R.*, No. 1, p. 17.

S Surbiton Golf Course, one seen on Apr. 15 (DP). Wimbledon Common, one observed at close quarters on Apr. 29 (AHB, IJB).

**262 Green Woodpecker**

M Inner London: Holland Park, present during the breeding season (sc, WGT). Kensington Gardens, frequently seen from January until late April and again from late August to the end of the year: two birds on Apr. 25 (CHFP, *et al.*). The Green Park, one on Aug. 2 (TLB). Regent's Park, one heard on Aug. 31 (HCH).

**263 Great Spotted Woodpecker**

M Inner London: nested in Holland Park and Regent's Park, but breeding not proved elsewhere.

**265 Wryneck**

M Osterley Park, a bird was seen carrying food on July 25, but nesting was not proved despite investigation (ICTN).

K Bexley, one pair bred (WIB).

S Bred at Chipstead (LIC), Coulsdon (AG, ICTN) and Purley (PJH). A pair was observed in the breeding season at Banstead (MDL) and another at Leatherhead (SHC).



**271 Woodlark**

During 1952 at least 17 pairs were known to have bred in the Area out of a total of 38 pairs recorded in the breeding season. Of the remaining twenty-one pairs a high proportion was strongly suspected to have bred.

E Hainault Forest, two pairs bred and a third recorded during the breeding season (MRC, MDW, PS). South Weald Park, three pairs bred (BH). In Epping Forest and Gilwell Park singing males were heard early in March (GCG, ETN).

H 1951. One pair bred in a bed of carnations in the grounds of a large house at Bushey Heath (JNH).

No breeding records for 1952, although birds were seen at Mimms-shall woods on June 12 (PKB). At Bushey Heath two were heard singing near the 1951 breeding area but did not stay (JNH). Bushy Park, a pair present in the breeding season (EMG). Croxley Green, there were five on Oct. 11 (HFG).

M Ruislip district, at least three pairs bred, two of which were double brooded (seven observers). Bentley Priory, a pair was seen between April and June on inaccessible ground. A second pair seen during February near Clamp Hill did not breed (EHW). Mill Hill, one on Feb. 23. Stanmore, a pair on Apr. 27. Scratch Wood, one during April and early May (PELS, EHW). At South Mimms a singing bird was seen on Mar. 16 (EHW).

K Hayes Common, one pair bred and a second suspected (AWB, GEM). Beckenham, one singing from the roof of a newly completed house on June 22 (DEP). Crayford, one on Mar. 26 (KHP).

S Addington, Shirley Hills and Spring Park districts, two pairs reared young and at least three other pairs were suspected of breeding (AJH, DEP, HEP, FWPR). Single pairs were proved to have bred at Cobham (JF), Headley Heath (HH), Hinchley Wood (DP) and Fetcham Downs (EHH). Richmond Park, two pairs bred (FWL, FRM).

Birds were also observed and suspected of breeding at Ashted Common (two or three pairs), Banstead (one pair), Esher Common (two or three pairs), Reigate Heath (four pairs), Weybridge (one pair), and Wimbledon Common (three pairs). (GMC, LIC, HB, SK, MRB, WGT).

**274 Swallow**

A nestling ringed at Braintree, Essex, by KHP on Aug. 22, 1951, was found dead at East London, Cape Province, South Africa, on Jan. 15, 1952. (*B.B.*, 45, p. 275).

E Navestock, a flock of c. 5,000 birds congregated in a reed-bed beside the lake on the evening of Sept. 4 (RBW).

M London Airport, 39 first brood nests reared 132 young to flying stage. At least 22 second brood nests were found (HAB).

**276 House Martin**

M Inner London: a heavy passage was noted all over the area from Sept. 8 to Oct. 15, reaching a very noticeable peak on Oct. 3 and 4 (many observers).

**280 Carrion Crow**

M Inner London: a party of 22 on the rooftops of Grosvenor Place, S.W.1, on Nov. 3 (PWEC).

**281 Hooded Crow**

E Wanstead Flats, one on Nov. 29 and Dec. 3 (AL, AVP).

H Arkley, one on Nov. 12 (BLS). Old Parkbury, one on Oct. 26 (DWT, JFWB).

M Brent Res., one on Dec. 20 and 21 (JFWB, DWT). Colnbrook, one on Nov. 9 (HFG). Horsenden Hill, Greenford, one to four birds seen on five dates between Nov. 9 and Dec. 28. The party of four was seen feeding with a flock of 143 Carrion Crows on Nov. 22 (FHL, WNM, CAW). Ruislip, three between Dec. 17 and the end of the year (CB, TLB). Uxbridge, one on Dec. 25 (NHP).

K Hayes, one on Oct. 26 (AWB). Stone Marshes, one on Oct. 22 (KHP).

S Godstone, one on Jan. 3 (AJH). Addington, one on Oct. 18 (HEP). Between Ashted and Headley, one on Oct. 20 (HB).

**282 Rook**

M Inner London: Queen Square, Bloomsbury, c. 50 with a flock of c. 250 Jackdaws flying over, W.S.W., on Oct. 12, and six with three Jackdaws flying over N.N.W., on Oct. 25 (sc).

**286 Jay**

M Inner London: nested in Battersea Park, Kensington Gardens, Ladbroke Square and Regent's Park (many observers). On April 20 a pair was watched taking nesting material from the Green Park to the southern portico of Lancaster House. No subsequent activity was noted and when admission to Lancaster House garden was obtained on April 25 the remains of the nest were found on the ground (MRB, WGT). (*cf. LBR.*, 16, p. 6). A nest, possibly the work of this pair, was being built in the Green Park on May 9 but was abandoned (AJHY). A young bird was seen there, however, on July 16 (VCMH).

**293 Willow Tit**

M Ruislip district, two or three birds were regularly seen from January until early June, but after unsuccessful nesting they were not seen until late autumn (BPP, NHP, EHW). Whitewebbs Park, a small party on July 6 (LJJ).

K Chislehurst, two on Dec. 7 (FJH). Crofton Woods, near Orpington, two on Nov. 23 (AHB). Farnborough, one on Aug. 6. St. Paul's Cray, two on Apr. 27 and Dec. 21 (WIB, EMH).

S Single birds reported from Bookham Common on Jan. 13, Mar. 9, July 27, Oct. 12 and Nov. 9; from Purley on June 29 and Selsdon on Aug. 14 (GB, EMH, PJH). Epsom Common, a pair on Mar. 23 (RCH).

**296 Nuthatch**

M Inner London: Regent's Park, one on Aug. 25 (EHW).

**301 Mistle Thrush**

M Inner London: Hammersmith, a pair nested in the iron canopy of a statue at St. Paul's School. This site was used also in 1951 (AM-J). Victoria, S.W.1, one fed from an office windowsill on Feb. 8 (AJHY).

**302 Fieldfare**

K Bexley, a marked movement noticed between Nov. 2-12. Birds were seen to pass in parties varying in strength between 20 and 80 in a W.S.W. direction during all hours of the day, with the heaviest movement before 9 a.m. (KHP).

**304 Redwing**

S Bookham Common, a considerable movement towards the S.W. was observed on Nov. 9. A count made between 10.30 hrs. and 15.15 hrs. revealed c. 5,000 birds passing in that direction (GB, SHC).

**307 Ring Ouzel**

M Hampstead Heath, a male on Apr. 28 and May 11 (JFWB, MFBB, KFS, GT).

Inner London: South Kensington, a male present for some hours in the gardens of the Natural History Museum on Oct. 2 (JFB, RWHN).

K Danson Park, a male seen on Apr. 19 (ws).

**308 Blackbird**

M Inner London: Cripplegate area, at least eleven pairs were established during the breeding season—an unprecedented number (NJPW).

**311 Wheatear,**

Passage through the Area lasted from Mar. 9 until May 7 in the spring, and from June 24 until Nov. 2 in the autumn. An adult was seen at Ruxley G.P. on June 2 and 3 and at Staines on June 21 when a juvenile was reported from Hampstead Heath (HAB, FJH, JFH, KES). On June 28 and 29 a young bird in company with an adult was seen at Beddington S.F. (BSM).

**317 Stonechat**

Again ones and twos were reported between January and March and in the autumn from August onwards from widely separated parts of the Area. The following are the only breeding season records:—

E Rainham, one pair bred successfully (RS).

M Bred at Northolt (TLB) and Ponders End (JLFP).

S Epsom Common, a pair with young on the wing, May 22 (HH).

**318 Whinchat**

B Near Horton, a pair seen on June 17 (ICTN).

E Nested at the following places:—Bulphan Fen, Fairlop, Fisher's Green, Hornchurch, Rainham and Rainham Marshes, Roding Valley, South Ockenden and Waltham Abbey (BWB, MRC, BH, JLFP, RS).

H Only one nesting record received; a pair bred at Elstree (EHW).

- M Bred at Osterley, Perry Oaks S.F., Staines and Scratch Wood (AG, ICTN, PELS). Birds were also observed in the breeding season at Enfield, Ponders End S.F. and Springwell Lake G.P. (TLB, JLFP).
- K Thames Marshes, at least 10 pairs bred between Abbey Wood and Swanscombe (GB, JFB, WIB, DP, KHP).
- S Walton G.P., one pair nested (RCHG, DP).

### 320 Redstart

- E Bred in Epping Forest where birds were seen feeding young during May and June at Connaught Water, High Beach and Sewardstonebury (JLFP). Hainault Forest, at least two pairs bred (MRC, MDW). South Weald Park, at least two pairs nested (RS).
- H Cuffley, one pair nested (LJJ, BLS). Hoddesdon, one pair seen feeding young on June 2 (LJJ).
- M Stanmore Common, at least one pair reared young (EHW).
- K No breeding records received.
- S Ashtead Common, one pair bred and possibly a second (AWW). Richmond Park, five pairs bred (BAM).

### 321 Black Redstart

The close watch kept in the years 1948-51 was not maintained in 1952 and these records should not therefore be compared too closely with those of previous seasons. However, the general impression given is one of a maintained breeding population in the stronghold of the City with a probable 10-12 pairs and at least 3 other males occupying territories. There is no indication of breeding success.

- E Sewardstone, a female or immature male on Feb. 17 and another from Dec. 15-30 (PFCR).
- M Ponders End Gas Works, a male singing, May 10 (JLFP). Ruislip Lido, one male (BPP).
- Inner London: the territories usually occupied again held pairs or singing males, with the addition of a new breeding record in the Minorities area. Brompton Cemetery had two males early in the season, and singing males were recorded, principally in May and June, in Paddington, Edgware and near Regents Park. Two males, and possibly a third, once more wintered in the City (many observers).
- K Farningham, a female or immature male seen on a rough hillside, Mar. 8 (WIB). Ruxley Gravel Pit, a female or immature male in company with three wheatears on Mar. 30, and a young bird with palest under tail coverts on Oct. 12 (FJH).
- S Beddington Sewage Farm, one wintering bird stayed until Feb. 10 (BSM); one, Oct. 24 (AFM). Norwood Park, an adult male and female, Apr. 4 (RHW). Croydon New Power Station, an adult male on Apr. 8 was joined by a second male on Apr. 9 and a female on Apr. 11. Pair feeding two young, June 1 (BSM, JG). Beddington Cement Works, a male singing on Apr. 9. No hen seen but 3-4 juveniles on June 29 (BSM). Coulsdon, a female or immature male on Oct. 26 (BWB).

**327 Grasshopper Warbler**

- H Rickmansworth, one on Apr. 20 (HFG). Rowley Green, one on June 29 and 30 (WDM, EHW).
- M Littleton, Queen Mary Res., one on May 4 (CH, FHW). Ruislip Marsh, two birds on three dates between May 20 and 31 and one on June 1 and 6 (TLB).
- K Stone Marshes, one seen and heard from June 1-10 but not subsequently (GB). Swanscombe, a pair was seen and heard at a suitable locality and young suspected, but breeding was not proved (WJI).
- S Ashtead and Epsom Commons, one pair bred. Two other singing males heard in this area were considered unmated (HH). Bookham Common, at least two singing males were heard between Apr. 23 and June 2 (GB, SHC, AJH, JMR).

**333 Reed Warbler**

- B Near Horton, two singing on June 17 (ICTN).
- E Fisher's Green G.P., at least 10 pairs recorded during the breeding season (JLFP). Berwick Pond, Rainham, 12 pairs were estimated as breeding although only six nests were found (BWB). On nearby parts of Rainham Marshes 15 pairs were estimated as breeding (RS). Sewardstone G.P., one pair recorded during May (JLFP).
- H Bred at Aldenham Park, one pair; Chestnut Marshes, two pairs at least; Old Parkbury, one pair bred. At Stocker's Lake two or three pairs were present during late June (NHP, BLS, EHW).
- M Although singing birds were located at Ruislip Res. and six or seven pairs estimated to be situated on parts of Staines Moor, no proof of breeding has been received for the county (TLB, ICTN).
- K Ruxley G.P., two pairs believed to have bred (AWB, FJH). Thames Marshes, bred as usual on all the marshes between Plumstead and Swanscombe (JFB).
- S Barn Elms Res., one pair bred (GLS). Beddington S.F., one pair nested (BSM). Mitcham, Watermeads, a pair was seen feeding young on July 13 (BPA). At Epsom S.F. up to nine singing males were seen during June which suggests the birds bred here (HB, HH, SK).

**334 Marsh Warbler**

- K Swanscombe Marshes, a pair feeding two young were watched on several occasions between July 20 and 27. An empty nest was found nearby and identified by JFB as belonging to this species. Full plumage notes together with notes of calls and song have been received (JFB, WIB, JJC, KHP).

**343 Blackcap**

- M Inner London: breeding season records: Holland Park, a cock singing on May 24 and June 7 when a hen was also seen (SC, WGT). Kensington Gardens, a pair seen on June 18 and the cock still singing on the next day (RWHH, CHFP).

K Catford, S.E.6, a cock bird visited daily two bird tables within a hundred yards of each other from Dec. 25 until the end of the year. This bird fed on hawthorn berries, pieces of nut, fat and bread-crumbs and was most aggressive towards other bird table visitors (JIG, DEPT).

### 354 Willow Warbler

K A Willow Warbler showing distinct characteristics of the northern race was observed at close quarters and in excellent light conditions at Shoreham on Apr. 13 (EHG).

M Inner London: Holland Park, one heard singing on May 24 and June 7 but no proof of nesting (WGT, SC).

### 356 Chiffchaff

M Inner London: Holland Park, a singing bird was heard on May 24 and a second bird is believed to have been present (WGT, SC).

*General Note.*—The spring passage of *Phylloscopi* was early this year, both Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler arrivals being observed during the second and third weeks of March.

### 357 Wood Warbler

E Two breeding records only; the first from Stifford, the second from Holdens Wood, Warley (BH, RBW). Singing birds were recorded in Epping Forest during the breeding season.

H No proof of breeding, although two singing birds were recorded at Cuffley during May and June, and a third bird heard at the West Herts. Golf Club, Watford, during the same period (PKB, JNH, LJJ, BLS).

M Bred at Ruislip (two pairs) and Whitewebbs Park (TLB, BPP, NHP). Other singing males were heard in the breeding season at Harrow Weald and Stanmore Common where they probably bred (EHW).

K Hayes Common, three pairs bred. Spring Park, West Wickham, two pairs nested (AWB, GEM). No other county records received.

S Breeding strength of two pairs at each of the following places: Addington, Black Pond, Esher, and Cobham. At Chelsham one pair nested (JF, HEP). Singing birds were reported from Banstead, Esher, Mickleham and Shirley Hills (TGA, LB, DEP, DWP, FWPR). The complete absence of this species from previous breeding haunts at Ashted and Epsom Common is reported by HH.

### 365 Firecrest

K Chislehurst Common, one seen daily from Nov. 24-29 (HPM). Hayes Common, one on Dec. 7 (AWB). In both cases supporting field notes were submitted.

### 368 Pied Flycatcher

E Gidea Park, one on Sept. 26 (DG, RBW). West Ham, one stayed from Sept. 19 to 21 in a vicarage garden (HSB).

H Cheshunt and Hamper Mill, one at each place on Sept. 7 (BPP, EHW).

M One spring record: Wembley, a male on Apr. 25 (RHMR). Hampstead Heath, one on five dates between Sept. 2 and 16, two on

Sept. 20 (JFWB, KES, GT). Staines Moor, one on Aug. 24 (ICTN).  
 Inner London: smaller numbers were noted than in 1951 (*c.f.* *L.B.R.*, 16, p. 12); Regent's Park, one on June 5 and a male and a female on June 6 (HCH, EHW). Birds on autumn passage were noted between Aug. 8 and Sept. 25 in the Green Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill with a maximum of seven in Regent's Park on Aug. 14 (AJHY, CHS, H, WGT *et al.*).

K Bexley, one in Churchfield Wood on Sept. 18 and 19 (KHP).

S Ham Common, one on May 1 (FRM). Barn Elms Res., one in the trees on Aug. 11 (HCH). Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 17 and Sept. 14 (BSM, OCL, ISS). Dulwich, one on Sept. 18 (OCL, ISS).

### 373 Meadow Pipit

M Inner London: Cripplegate, at least 50 and possibly as many as 100 on bombed sites on Mar. 31 at the end of a snowy period (SDH, NJPW).

### 379(a) Rock Pipit

E King George V Res., one on Nov. 9 (JLFP).

M Brent Res., one on Mar. 29 (EHW). Staines Res., one on Mar. 30 (HCH), one or two observed on seven dates between Oct. 4 and Nov. 2 (FHJ, HPM, CAW).

S Barn Elms Res., one on Apr. 5, Oct. 12 and Oct. 25 (PJKB, AG, HPM).

K Dartford and Stone Marshes, up to six from January to mid-March. One or two single birds from Sept. 16 until the main arrival on Oct. 12, when 20 or more frequented the saltings from then until the end of the year. Swanscombe Marshes, 10 from January until mid-March and *c.* 40 from October to December with a maximum of 80 plus on Oct. 26 (GB, JFB, WIB, KHP). Ruxley G.P., one on Oct. 12 (FJH).

### 379(d) Water Pipit

M Staines. King George VI Res., one on Oct. 4, 5 and 12 (FHJ, HPM). Full supporting details have been received.

### 380(a) Pied Wagtail

E Roding Valley, a roost of 500 birds, in a reed-bed, was located during November and December (MRC, MDW).

H London Colney, a small roost of up to 40 birds during mid October (RC, SC).

M Ponders End, a roost of *c.* 120 birds on Sept. 10 in a gravel pit in the Brimsdown district (JLFP).

Inner London: one pair nested near Cannon Street, but no evidence was obtained of breeding at Cripplegate (NJPW).

K Hayes Common, the small roost of 50 plus was in use from July until the end of the year (GEM).

S Barn Elms Res., a roost of 250-300 birds in the pit during early October (HPM). Godstone, a roost of *c.* 100 birds in the reeds by the Town Pond on Feb. 24 (CMA, EWG). Spring Park, near West Wick-

ham, Kent, c. 100 birds using a roost in silver birches on July 20 (DEP). Thornton Heath Pond, over 100 birds roosting in the adjacent trees on Sept. 14 (LP).

### 380(b) White Wagtail

- E Walthamstow Res., one on Apr. 27 (HWR).  
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Apr. 11, 13 and 24 (AGH, ICTN, BPP). Staines Res., one on Apr. 27 and two on May 17 (LB, BAR, GW).  
 S Barn Elms Res., one on Apr. 14 (GLS). Beddington S.F., one on Apr. 8 (AJH).

### 381 Grey Wagtail

Breeding records only:—

- H Bred at Hamper Mill and Rickmansworth, one pair at each locality (JNH, EHW).  
 M Harefield, a pair with five or six young on June 29 (CAW). Osterley Park, one pair bred (MJA).  
 Inner London: Cripplegate, a pair reared two broods in a bombed basement. This is the first nesting record for Inner London (JFR, NJPW, RBW *et al.*). Fetter Lane, a female frequented a bombed site from Feb. 29 until at least June 12 (EHW).  
 K Eynsford, one pair bred (WIB).  
 S Beddington S.F., one pair bred (BPA, BSM). Epsom S.F., one pair bred (HH). Godstone, two young seen close to usual nesting place, June 9 (HB). Imber Court, Molesey Lock, at least one pair present during the breeding season (RCHG). River Mole near Burford Bridge, two during the breeding season (GMC).

### 382(a) Yellow Wagtail

This species continues to breed in good numbers along the Thames-side marshes north and south of the River, and along the valleys of the rivers Colne, Lea, Darent and Wandle. From all the London reservoirs, gravel pits and sewage farms come reports of continued breeding.

- E King George V Res., two flocks totalling 300-350 birds were seen on the banks of the reservoir on Aug. 16 (JLFP).

#### Variant Yellow Wagtails

Five typical Blue-headed Wagtails (*M. f. flava*) were recorded during the last two weeks of April and the first week of May from the usual reservoir and sewage farm localities. Intermediate forms and variants were also recorded.

### 383 Waxwing

- M Mill Hill, one on Dec. 1 (EHW).

### 384 Great Grey Shrike

- H Stocker's Lake, one on Jan. 19 (NHP).  
 M Brent Res., one on Oct. 7 (MB). Ruislip Marsh, one on Jan. 7 (TLB).



S Mitcham Common and the adjacent Beddington S.F., one from Nov. 21 until the end of the year (many observers).

### 388 Red-backed Shrike

Out of a total of 61 pairs or presumed pairs found in the London Area during the 1952 breeding season, 43 were known to have nested. (*cf. L.B.R., 16, p. 12*).

### [390 Rose-coloured Starling

M Perry Oaks S.F., full details have been received from CAW and several other observers of a bird which resembled in many respects an immature of this species. It was seen during the first week of July in company with adult and juvenile Starlings, some of which were of the sandy-yellow plumage phase. The bird under notice, however, differed considerably in the field from these. A wide range of skins of Rose-coloured Starlings and Starlings was subsequently examined at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.). Space will not permit full field notes or comments on the skins examined, but from the details supplied the Perry Oaks bird closely resembled a Rose-coloured Starling except for the colour of the crown and mantle. In these areas the bird under consideration showed brighter plumage than the skins could indicate, taking into account (i) the difference between "live" and "dead" plumage and (ii) the wide variation in juvenile Starling plumage which graduates from brown to grey. In view of this it has been agreed to place this record in square brackets.]

### 391 Hawfinch

Breeding records only are published.

M Hampstead Heath, four separate pairs were recorded from early March onwards and breeding was presumed to have taken place (JFW, GT). Ruislip, one nest was located and at least three other pairs were in the district during the breeding season (BPP, NHP). Whitewebbs Park, three young heard in the tree tops on June 8 (HL).

Inner London: Regent's Park, a pair feeding four young on cherry stones on June 19, as in 1951 (*cf. L.B.R., 16, p. 7*), five seen on June 20 and one on July 10 (HCH, EHW). St. John's Wood, a male seen in a garden of Elm Tree Road on May 30, where five, possibly a family party, were recorded on June 6 (HMRK).

K Catford, S.E.6, Forsters Park, one pair bred (JYG, DEPT). Chislehurst, one pair successfully reared young (FJH). Orpington, two juveniles seen and heard giving hunger call on June 10 (AHB).

S Dulwich Park, one adult with a juvenile on May 24 (RAW). Kew Gardens, two pairs bred successfully (JWL). Mickleham, Sanderstead and South Croydon, recorded in these districts eleven times between April and the end of June (AJH).

**393 Goldfinch**

M Inner London: Regent's Park, at least one pair bred successfully (HCH, EHW). St. John's Wood, one singing in a derelict garden on June 11 (HCH). Again occurred outside the breeding season on the City bombed sites, at Chelsea and St. Pancras (PD, EHW). From early December until the end of the year a party of 20-30 birds was regularly seen feeding in a garden near Prince of Wales Drive, Battersea. Only occasional single birds and small parties were recorded in Battersea Park, where breeding took place in 1949 and 1950 (JNAR).

**394 Siskin**

E Hainault, one on Nov. 8 (RBW).

H Bayfordbury, two on Jan. 24 (RH).

M Small parties of up to 10 birds were reported early in the year from Ickenham, Scratch Wood, Whitewebbs Park and Uxbridge (JD, LJJ, CAW, EHW). Single birds were observed during November at Bentley Priory and Finchley (EHW). Uxbridge, a flock of 45 on Dec. 28 (REJ).

K Single birds, and small parties of up to five, were recorded from Beckenham, Joyden's Wood and Mottingham during February and March (EMH, DEP, KHP). Bickley, one on Oct. 10 (AWB). Shooter's Hill, c. 10 in birches on Dec. 25 (GLB).

S Godstone, a flock of 30 on Jan. 3 was the largest recorded here during the winter months (AJH). Lonsdale Road Res., two in osiers on Jan. 27 (GLS).

**395 Linnet**

M Inner London: several autumn and winter records of single birds or small parties in Cripplegate and Regent's Park, but the following deserve mention:—Cripplegate, 15-16 on Mar. 31 and Apr. 1 (NJPW, EHW); Regent's Park, one on Apr. 12 and one on May 1 (DIMW, EHW).

**397 Redpoll**

These observations constitute the only breeding season records for the Area. The species was reported from the usual localities during the winter months. In Inner London single birds were seen in Regent's Park on Apr. 28 and July 5 (EHW).

H St. Albans, two pairs seen displaying during June (BLS).

M Bentley Priory, party of young seen in gardens on July 12 (EHW). Hampstead Heath, family party seen on July 19 (KES).

K Hayes, family party on Aug. 17 (AWB). Orpington, single birds were seen during the breeding season but nesting not proven (AHB).

S At Banstead and Tadworth two pairs are recorded during the breeding season (HB). Oxted, the bird remains common in this district.

**401 Bullfinch**

M Inner London: Kensington Gardens, one on Mar. 17 (LCJF).

**408 Brambling**

No unusual influx or movement was recorded during the winter months when single birds and small flocks were observed in the usual agricultural localities.

At Perry Oaks S.F. and on Staines Moor a flock of between 20 and 40 birds was reported from early December onwards (ICTN, DAP).

At Bickley, Kent, a flock of c. 40 birds frequented open land from late November onwards (AWB), whilst at Leatherhead, in Surrey, a flock of c. 50 was seen on Dec. 27 (DAC).

- M Inner London: Notting Hill, a flock of 14 on Oct. 31 (RM); Regent's Park, one with Greenfinches and Chaffinches on Mar. 8 (MCO). [A hen or immature bird seen at Cripplegate on July 23-24 was evidently an escaped cage bird (NJPW, RBW).]

**410 Corn Bunting**

E Seven breeding pairs recorded at Aveley and one each from Bulphan Fen and South Ockenden (BH). Single birds reported during April and May from Epping Long Green, Hornchurch and Rainham (BWB, MRC, BH, HWR). Rainham Marshes, eight on May 17 (BH). Brentwood S.F., a flock of c. 30 on Nov. 29 (RFH, RBW).

H Single birds were observed in the Hamper Mill, Watford and Maple Cross districts between early June and July 20 when one was seen near Shenley (HFG, WDM, NHP, EHW).

M Recorded in twos and threes for most months of the year from Harmondsworth, Harlington, London Airport, Perry Oaks and Staines districts.

K Dartford Marshes, one pair nested with three other singing males present (JFB). Singing birds were recorded at Erith Marshes and Stone Marshes from March to June. Darenth Wood, one on Apr. 25. Little Darenth, one on June 6 and July 6. Stone Marshes, a party of six in thick fog on Dec. 6 (GB, JFB, WIB, KHP).

S Ewell, two singing males observed between Apr. 28 and May 14 (DAC). Walton G.P., a singing male between June 22 and 29 (DP).

**415 Cirl Bunting**

H Bushey Heath, a male on June 15 but not subsequently (EHW).

S Banstead-Woodmansterne, a male on Apr. 12, and a pair, with the male singing, between May 18 and July 20 (BWB, DAC, BSM, DBP). Betchworth, within the Society's Area, two males singing on May 8 (HB).

**423 Snow Bunting**

M Staines Res., one flew over calling on Nov. 2 (FHJ).

S Dulwich Common, one on Nov. 16 (HEP).

**425 Tree Sparrow**

Excluding Kent, flocks exceeding 20 birds were reported outside the breeding season from seven localities. Flocks of over 100 were seen on Perry Oaks S.F. at the end of July and during September

and November. A single bird was seen in Regent's Park on Oct. 17 (EHW).

- E Aveley, 19 pairs bred; Chingford, one pair; Gilwell Park and Sewardstone district, not less than five pairs; Roding Valley, four pairs nested; Romford S.F., one pair; Stifford, one pair. Nesting also suspected in Hainault Forest and Navestock where birds were seen during the breeding season (MRC, BH, JLEP, RS).
- H Broxbourne and Hoddesdon, three pairs bred (JLEP). Old Parkbury, six pairs bred; Watford S.F. and Hamper Mill district, 12 pairs bred (EHW)
- M Mill Hill and Perry Oaks S.F., one pair bred at each place (ICTN, DWT).
- K Dartford Marshes, bred in two small colonies and on the adjacent Stone Marshes at least three pairs utilised hollow metal telegraph poles as nesting sites (GB, JFB). Elmers End S.F., one pair bred (JWA, GEM).
- S Beddington, a census revealed 51 pairs nesting on the sewage farm and 15 pairs in the nearby Beddington Park (AJH, BSM). (*cf. L.B.R., 15, 16*).

# The Duck Census in the London Area 1951-1953

By R. C. HOMES

TWO interim reports (1 and 2) have already been published on the duck census in the London Area, which was resumed after the war in November, 1947, and integrated with the national census organised by the British Section of the International Wildfowl Inquiry in March, 1948. The present paper covers the winters of 1951-52 and 1952-53, and is intended to be read in conjunction with the previous reports.

In the first of these winters there was extremely severe weather in the north of Britain, and it was very cold generally from January 16th onwards with temperatures as low as 1° F. recorded in Aberdeenshire and 2° F. in Shropshire. There was frequent snow in the north and west, and winds of hurricane force in the Orkneys. Without the obvious southward movement of ducks as a result of the freezing of northern waters the peak numbers of mallard in the winter of 1951-52 in our Area would almost certainly have shown a considerable drop, as they did in the following winter. Lower numbers of wigeon and pochard in both winters were partly offset in 1951-52 for the same reason. There was no appreciable change in the average winter numbers of tufted duck, goldeneye or goosander, though all three species were recorded in higher numbers than usual during spring passage in 1953. Teal have been slightly more numerous, and in early 1953 smew again reached the unusually high level of early 1951.

## MALLARD. *Anas platyrhynchos* L.

In the previous review (*L.B.R.*, 15, p. 54) it was thought that a recovery from the hard winter of 1946-47 had taken place in 1949 and that in the winter of 1950-51 mallard population in the London Area was about 32-33% above that of 1938-39, the only pre-war winter for which comparative figures were available. In the light of later information the trend holds good but the figure should be corrected to 30%.

If we take first the criterion of the average of the three counts in the period November-January, we find that in 1951-52 this was within one per cent. of the 1950-51 figure. This was due, however, to an exceptional influx in January, 1952, when following a widespread freezing-up in the north of England the numbers of mallard on our waters rose to 5274 (including 1% interpolated), which is easily the highest figure recorded since the censuses began. Earlier in the winter numbers had been a little below those in 1950-51. In 1952-53 there was no comparable influx, and on the census dates from mid-October to mid-February numbers varied only from 3068 to 3714. The average for the November-January counts was 20% below the two previous winters, and the results may be tabulated as follows:—

	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53
Average of Nov.-Jan. counts on all waters counted ... ..	4271	4392	3459
Percentage of 1950-51 to the nearest one per cent. ... ..	100	100	80

Another comparison made in the previous paper was between the average for the November-January counts on waters counted in 1938-39 and in 1950-51. If this is continued for the two ensuing winters, the result is as follows:—

	1938-39	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53
Average ... ..	2287	2989	2884	2212
Percentage of 1938-39 ... ..	100	130	126	97

There is, thus, little difference between comparable figures in the sample and the total counts.

#### TEAL. *Anas crecca* L.

Whereas the winters of 1949-50 and 1950-51 had shown a marked reduction in the numbers of teal on the reservoirs, the later winters have seen an improvement, especially in 1951-52. The largest totals recorded in recent winters have been as follows:—

1947-48	690	January 17th, 1948
1948-49	645	January 1st, 1949
1949-50	309	January 15th, 1950
1950-51	338	March 4th, 1951
1951-52	663	February 24th, 1952
1952-53	510	December 14th, 1952

The chief localities are still Island Barn reservoir, with a maximum of 275, and the new King George VI reservoir, where there were 257 on February 24th, 1952. No flocks of over 300 have been recorded in the last two winters on census dates.

#### WIGEON. *Anas penelope* L.

In both the last two winters peak numbers have been a little lower than previously and there has been a slight tendency for numbers to be less concentrated at Staines. The largest totals for the census dates have been:—

1947-48	353	January 17th, 1948
1948-49	337	October 30th, 1948
1949-50	157	January 19th, 1950
1950-51	420	January 7th, 1951
1951-52	286	December 30th, 1951
1952-53	201	March 15th, 1953

#### SHOVELER. *Spatula clypeata* (L.).

The numbers of shoveler have failed to reach a hundred in the counts in either of the two winters now concerned. In 1951-52 there were from 55 to 70 during the middle of winter, rising to 82 on February 24th; in the following winter 90 on October 19th dwindled to a winter figure of 35-50 without any pronounced spring passage being noted on the census dates.

TUFTED DUCK. *Aythya fuligula* (L.).

In 1951-52 numbers of tufted duck built up to a peak of 2328 at the end of January and then followed the usual course of a steady decline in February and March. In 1952-53, however, the total of 2557 on December 14th had dropped by over 10% by the middle of January and then rose sharply again to 2950 on February 15th, the highest number yet recorded. The average of the two peaks of 2328 and 2950 conforms with the earlier assessment of an average peak winter population of 2500-3000.

The largest flocks have been of about 950 at Staines on November 16th, 1952, and 910 at Barn Elms on February 15th, 1953.

POCHARD. *Aythya ferina* (L.)

The winter population of pochard in 1951-52 showed a maximum of 979 on January 27th, but otherwise the highest total was 537 on the previous December 30th. As in the interval most northern waters were frozen, there may well have been more birds in the Area between these dates. However, in 1952-53 numbers were again low: in mid-January, when they are usually highest, there were 786 but the three other counts from mid-November to mid-February ranged from 483 to 553. In Somerset, on the other hand, exceptionally high numbers were recorded in November and December 1952.

The only locality with a single count of over 300 was Barn Elms, with 445 on January 18th, 1953.

GOLDENEYE. *Bucephala clangula* (L.).

There has been little sign of any increase in the winter population of goldeneye, but the counts on the census dates were not fully representative of the numbers actually present during the winter. It appears that the maximum for the months of November-January was about 25 in 1951-52 and about 30 in 1952-53. Spring passage was responsible for slightly higher numbers with a total of 35 on March 23rd, 1952, and 53 on March 15th, 1953.

GOOSANDER. *Mergus merganser* L.

The numbers of goosander in the last four winters have been remarkably steady. In 1951-52 there were 151 on January 27th and 163 on February 24th, with a drop to 102 on March 23rd; in 1952-53 there were again 151, but at a much earlier date—November 14th. A slight drop in January was followed by higher numbers in the middle of February (229) and the middle of March (248), probably as a result of the spring passage. Whether this is conspicuous on the census dates is largely a matter of chance, but the earlier estimate of 150 as a normal winter population seems to be well founded.

SMEW. *Mergus albellus* L.

The suggested normal winter population of 100 compares with a maximum of 103 in the winter of 1951-52, but this figure was on February 24th when several other species were showing a rise in numbers due to the arrival of birds on passage. It is satisfactory, therefore, that the



higher total of 184 recorded on January 7th, 1951, should have been exceeded by one of 190 on January 18th, 1953. It seems possible from a study of the full figures that the number of smew spending the winter in the Area may be tending to increase, but it is too soon to be sure whether this is a definite long-term trend.

## REFERENCES

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## The Census of Great Crested Grebes, 1952

By W. D. MELLUISH

A SUMMER census of Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) in the London Area was carried out by members of the Ornithological Section, in the early days of June 1952. It was the seventh annual count in the ten year sample census organised by the British Trust for Ornithology, begun in 1946 and extending from the Thames Valley northwards through the Midlands to parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, in which the Section is collaborating.

The weather for the count this year was rather changeable; warm, sunny conditions alternating with periods of thundery rain.

About 170 waters, consisting of flooded gravel pits, reservoirs and lakes, were visited and 89 were found to contain grebes. There were new occupations of gravel pits in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Middlesex: in the last named county a few pits were either wholly, or partly, filled in, and one freshly dug.

The total number of adult birds counted was 482, which shows a decline for the second year in succession. Records for two of the waters scheduled to be visited were not sent in, and if due allowance is made for these, the totals for 1951 and 1952, thus adjusted for strict comparison, are 501 and 467, respectively, representing a fall of 6.8% in the current season. This exactly continues the downward trend begun in the previous year when the total fell away from the 1950 peak figure by the same proportion of 6.8%.

It may here be of interest to list the strictly comparable results, shown under county headings, for the current and preceding years:—

	<i>Total Adults</i>	
	1951	1952
Bucks	22	28
Essex	75	97
Herts	96	78
Kent	6	12
Middlesex	195	127
Surrey	107	125
<i>Total</i>	501	467

Middlesex is exceptional in lying entirely within the 20 mile circle, centred on St. Paul's Cathedral. It is not surprising, therefore, that more grebes appear on our list each year for this than for the other home counties, but it will be seen that in 1952 Middlesex numbers declined very sharply from a total of 195 in 1951 to the low figure of 127 and were almost equalled by those for Surrey. The drop was partly due to the filling in of some of the gravel pits, numbers lost by this means not as yet being made up from newly excavated pits. Examples from the Shepperton series illustrate this result, where in two pits that were partly filled in the counts declined respectively from 13 and 14 in 1951 to 5 and 6 this season. Hertfordshire figures were also lower—by 18.7%—but the remaining counties all showed increases. the Essex total being up by as much as 29.3%.

As in the previous year, about half of the gravel pits visited contained grebes and the birds again showed a slight preference for this type of habitat, the figures being:—

Gravel Pits ... ..	245 adults counted.
Other Waters ... ..	237 .. ..

Although observers concentrated on obtaining accurate counts of total adults, they reported having seen more young birds than usual and records of 119 breeding pairs were sent in. This is only two pairs less than in 1951, in spite of the greater proportional decline in strength of the adult population. But the known difficulties experienced in the observation of nests (*vide L.B.R.*, 12, p. 36, and 13, p. 15) preclude any claim to accuracy and the result is merely tabled as probably indicating that there was little, if any, decline in the total number of nesting pairs in the Area.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that gravel pits, as well as being favoured generally by the species, were also preferred by grebes for their nest sites, 62 of the 119 pairs being found on these flooded workings.

My sincere thanks are offered to the following, for their assistance in the field:—H. E. Andrews, R. S. Ashley, L. Baker, T. L. Bartlett, Miss E. Bennett, H. Bentham, The Borough Road College N.H.S., E. H. Down, Miss E. M. Goom, Miss N. Goom, H. F. Greenfield, Miss G. Hains, L. F. Harris, Dr. J. M. Harrison, C. H. Hawes, J. N. Hobbs, R. C. Hodgson, P. A. D. Hollom, F. J. Holroyde, A. E. Jolley, C. F. Jones, K. P. Keywood, F. R. Mann, W. N. Mitchell, Miss E. Norris, J. O. Owens, Maj. A. Pam (per J. Farrand), C. H. F. Parsons, D. E. Pomeroy, B. A. Richards, M. G. Ridpath, H. W. Rudd, B. L. Sage, Miss E. Souter, L. C. Tearnan, W. G. Vincent, C. A. White, Prof. E. H. Warmington.

# A Report on the Bird Population of Four Gravel Pits in the London Area, 1948 to 1951

By K. P. KEYWOOD and W. D. MELLUISH.

## INTRODUCTION

IN 1948 the Ornithological Section decided to institute a survey of four areas of gravel pits within the Society's area, the terms of reference having the following preamble:—

“Excavation for clay and gravel had, before the War, played an important part in influencing the avifauna of the London area through the construction of a large number of artificial waters with a varying amount of cover and of adjacent areas of waste land. This process was accelerated to such an extent during the war that it has been decided to study the bird communities of four selected areas of this nature, as a sample, in order to put on record the detailed effect of these excavations.”

This report covers the field work carried out from 1948 to 1951 by members of the Ornithological Section.

## HISTORICAL—THE SAND AND GRAVEL INDUSTRY

The practice of extracting sand and gravel for commercial purposes from the natural deposits present in different parts of the country has resulted in the establishment of the largest extractive industry in the country after coal. The magnitude of the industry, which has been carried on for many generations, may be judged by the expansion from the extraction of two million tons in 1919 to thirty-five million tons in 1939 and to even higher levels during the War.

The gravels and sands which are the most useful and easily worked form a major part of the superficial or “drift” deposits. They are of comparatively recent geological age and are of two main types:—(1) sheets of gravel deposited by water escaping from ice edges during glacial times, which occur locally in large masses in major depressions and elsewhere cut into by streams in later times and left capping the tops of plateaux or ridges. These are known as “plateaux” or “glacial” gravels. (2) At lower levels deposits have been spread by existing rivers as valley gravels and are often covered by alluvium (peat or mud) deposited during historic times. Low-lying gravels, resting on clay or other impervious strata, are usually water filled almost to surface level, and excavations fill with water; it is with these “wet” pits that this paper is concerned.

The industry is very much alive to the objections to gravel workings, from the point of view of damage to amenity, to agriculture and other forms of land use, and every effort is made to minimise noise and other nuisances as far as possible during the extraction processes and in the after treatment of worked out pits, to restore the land to useful occu-

pation. This has been done by filling under skilled supervision and, after a period of consolidation, building has been carried out and, with the provision of topsoil suitable for plant growth, much land has been returned for agricultural use. Pits of long standing usually contain a population of fish, and several have been stocked with trout and other fish, thus affording good angling facilities. It may be of interest to quote here from the Report of the Advisory Committee on Sand and Gravel: "The larger and more overgrown 'wet' pits also become haunts of wild-fowl of various kinds. They provide a certain amount of shooting, or alternatively give shelter to wild life which is of interest to naturalists."

#### DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY AREAS

##### 1 *Feltham, Middlesex.*

- (1) *Location.* Vice County 21 (Middlesex). National Grid Map Ref.: 51/075728.
- (2) *Area.* (a) Of water. Approximately 30 acres.  
(b) Of surrounding ground. Approximately 60 acres.  
Total. 90 acres approximately.
- (3) *Age of pit.* Excavation commenced in 1927 and from 2 to 5 acres have been excavated each year up to the present. Pit under observation now disused, but dredging still going on at an adjacent pit on west boundary.
- (4) *Method of working.* Gravel taken in trucks to storage tower at north-east corner of area and a narrow gauge railway runs on three sides of the pit.
- (5) *Depth of water.* Varies from 6 to 10 feet.
- (6) *Nature of sides and banks.* Sides of the pit on east, south and west almost all precipitous, varying in height from 3 to 8 feet. On the north side the slope is more gradual and a steep 8 foot bank encloses a small marshy area, with dense growth of willows and other vegetation.
- (7) *Whether fish present.* Pike, Dace, Roach, and Perch.
- (8) *Whether used for dumping of refuse.* Dumping into the pit was carried on until June, 1948. Waste gravel was also dumped in the northern area. Small amount of rubbish dumped in main pit in mid-summer of 1949.
- (9) *Description of Vegetation.*
  - (a) In pit itself. Algae (*Cladophora glomerata*, *Spirogyra* spp. and *Rhizoclonium hieroglyphicum*).
  - (b) Of surrounding area. Willows fringe the greater part of banks. Derelict orchard in north-east corner of area. Dense growth of numerous species of plants on about 7 acres of north area, south-east corner and on tramway track along east side. In the south a cultivated area of about 4 acres is bordered on east side by gravel covered with sparse vegetation and containing two pools, both under 1 acre. West of cultivated area is rough ground

covered in summer by a dense growth of Scentless Mayweed (*Matricaria inodora*). A few clumps of hawthorn, elder and small ash trees occur in southern part of the area. Vegetation of north shore very dense in 1949, including - Great Willow Herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*).

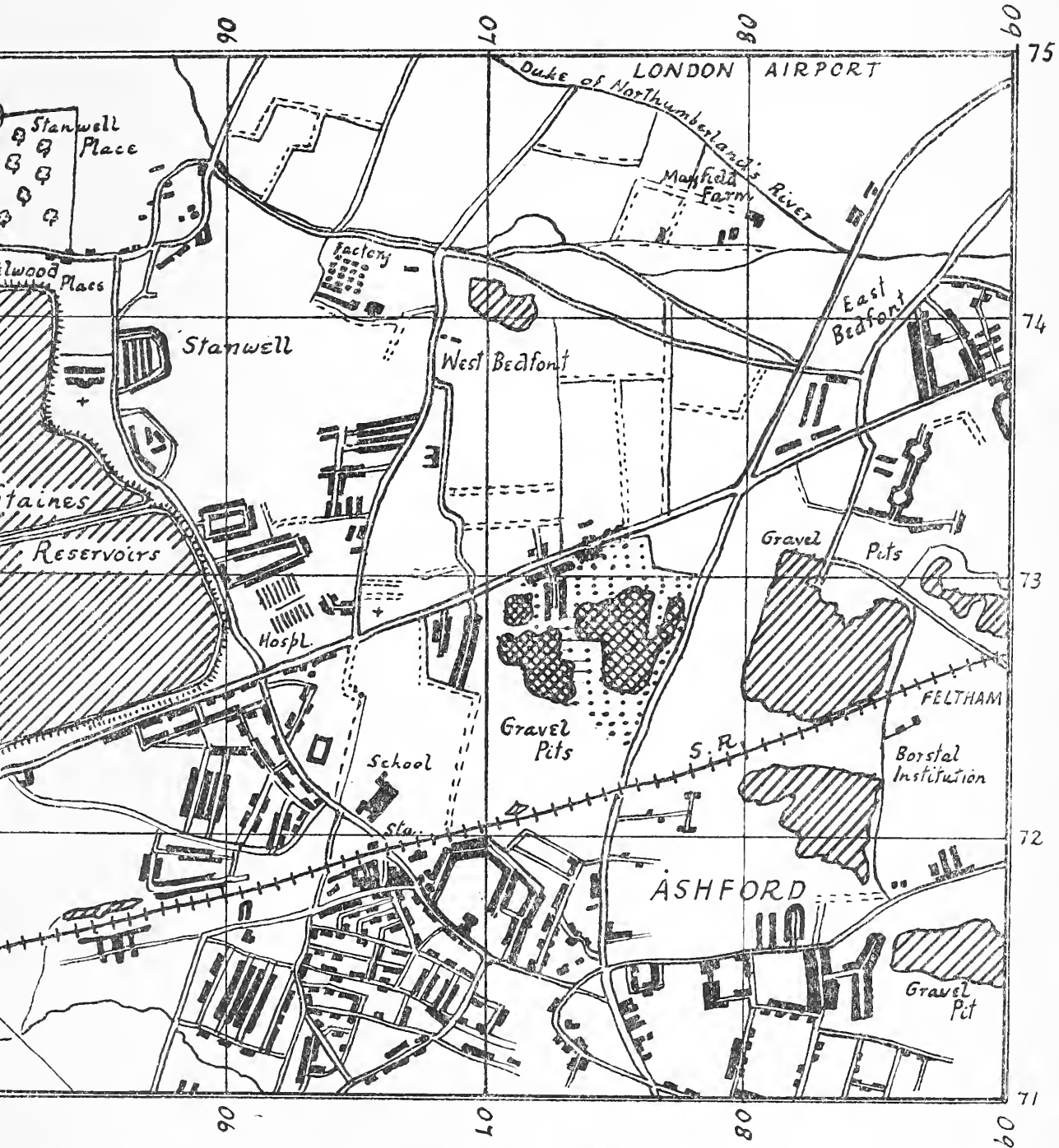


Fig. 1. Feltham (Middlesex).

The Survey Areas are shown dotted. Waters are hatched, or cross-hatched if part of an area studied. Buildings are in solid black, the built-up districts and streets being diagrammatic in that they are only roughly accurate as to detail. The maps are based on the Ordnance Survey—Scale 1 : 25,000 (about 2½" to 1 mile)—Provisional Edition, from which they are reduced.

- (10) *Type of soil and subsoil.* Flood Plain gravel. Borings reach London Clay at about 18 feet. Typical local section:-- Soil 2 feet. Gravel 2 feet. Loam 2 feet 3 inches. Gravel 12 feet. London Clay.
- (11) *Whether private or open to public.* Regarded as private but no real effort made to prevent access by the general public. Angling popular and during season banks lined with anglers. Small boys frequent. Little or no shooting, at any rate during the breeding season.
- (12) *Proximity of other sheets of water.* Two pits immediately adjacent to west side. Extensive series of pits cover a large area around East Bedfont to the east, nearest 300 yards away.
- (13) *General surroundings of the area studied.* Large stretches of arable land, with few hedges, in all directions. To south a market garden with extensive glasshouses. Beyond, a closely built up area forming part of the town of Ashford. Main road along north side of area is built-up.

2. *Mayesbrook Park, Barking, Essex.*

- (1) *Location.* Vice County 20 (Hertfordshire). National Grid Map Ref.: 51/465845.
- (2) *Area.* (a) Of water. 15.1 acres.  
(b) Of surrounding ground, 35.9 acres.  
Total. 51 acres approximately.
- (3) *Age of the pit.* Excavation commenced between 1923-25.
- (4) *Method of working and if disused when last worked.* Last worked in 1933.
- (5) *Depth of water.* Approximate mean, 6 feet.
- (6) *Nature of sides and banks.* Shelving and gently sloping.
- (7) *Whether fish present.* Not in large numbers. Roach and Stickleback seen.
- (8) *Whether used for dumping of refuse.* No.
- (9) *Description of vegetation.*  
(a) In pit itself. Extensive reed beds, which provided nesting sites for a colony of reed warblers and for other birds.  
(b) Of surrounding area. Sallow and willow in varying stages of development, birch, elder and hawthorn.
- (10) *Type of soil and subsoil.* About one foot of rather light loam overlying ballast.
- (11) *Whether private or open to the public.* Up to 1949 closed to the public but birds nesting boys give it attention. One hundred fishing permits granted but only sixteen anglers seen in two years. No shooting permitted but boys with air pistols occasionally shoot at water fowl. This interference is negligible. In 1949 the local authority turned the pit into a boating lake and lido and it was thrown open to the public.

- (12) *Proximity of other sheets of water.* Group of six lakes situated at a distance of from one mile to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the north-east, north and north-west: River Roding to the west: River Thames  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles to the south and Dagenham Reach, Beam and Ingrebourne Rovers and Berwick Pond between  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles and  $4\frac{3}{4}$  miles to the south-east.
- (13) *General surroundings of the area studied.* Area closely built-up on all sides up to the boundaries of the Park, except to the south, where an open marshy area extends to the north bank of the River Thames.

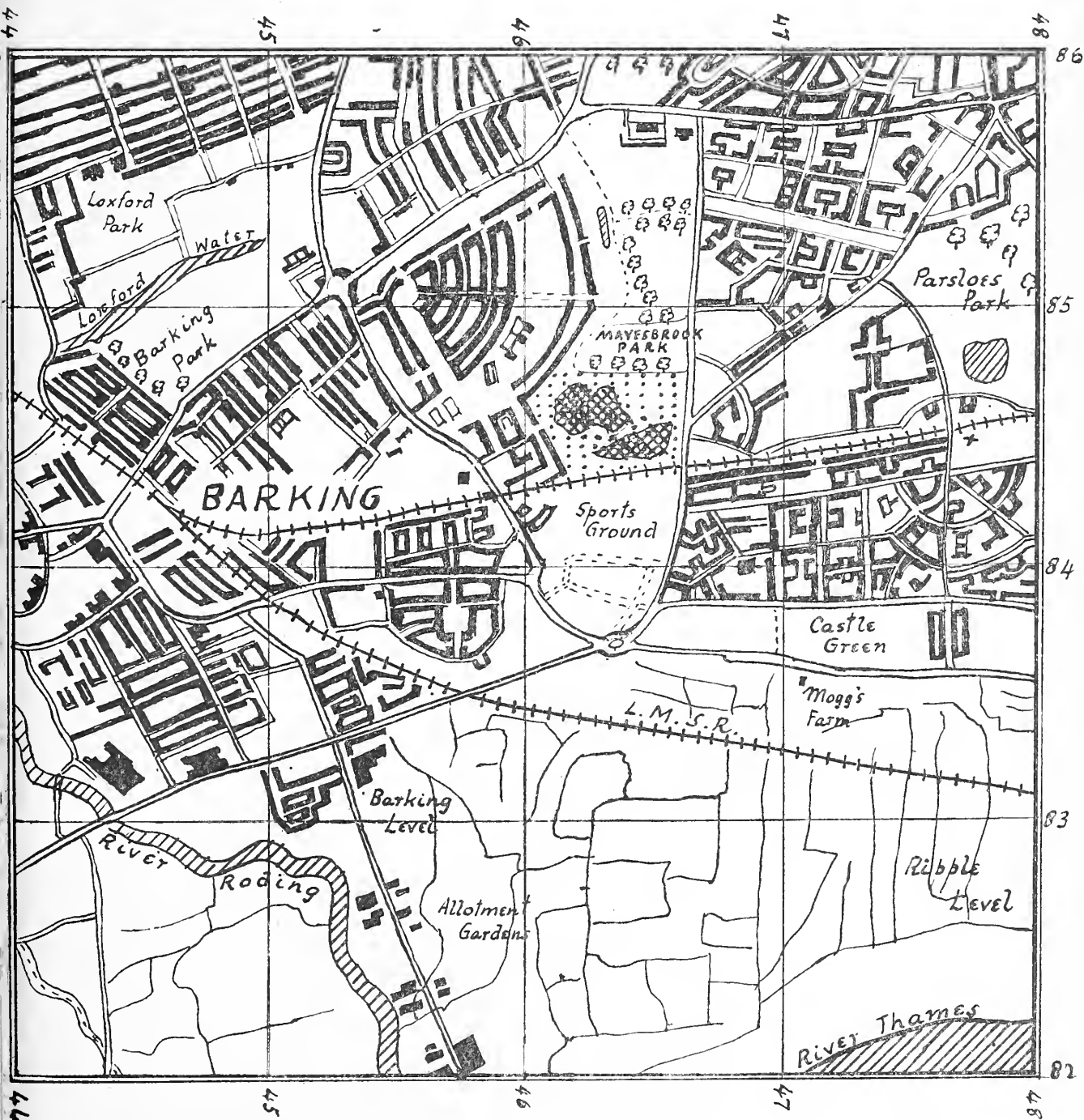


Fig. 2. Mayesbrook Park (Essex).



3. *Moor Mill, near Colney Street, Hertfordshire.*

- (1) *Location.* Vice County 20 (Hertfordshire). National Grid Map Ref.: 52/150024.
- (2) *Area.* (a) Of water. 6.5 acres.  
(b) Of surrounding ground. 23 acres.  
Total. 29.5 acres.
- (3) *Age of the pit.* Fifteen years.
- (4) *Method of working and if disused when last worked.* Presuming this to be the same as now in operation at adjacent diggings—by power drag lines. The pit is disused but it is not known how long abandoned.
- (5) *Depth of water.* Not known, but a large part is very shallow.
- (6) *Nature of sides and banks.* On the east side sloping and thickly overgrown. On the remaining sides, very gradual and with a mixed hedge of hawthorn with oaks, ash and white willow trees at the south-west corner, separating the lake from the old gravel workings. The rest of the western edge is grassy.
- (7) *Whether fish present.* Pike, Carp and Roach.
- (8) *Whether used for dumping of refuse.* No.
- (9) *Description of vegetation.*
  - (a) *In the pit itself.* *Phragmites*, *Carex*, *Juncus*, tall *Epilobium*, *Typha*, water *Myosotis*, Coltsfoot, Iris.
  - (b) *Of surrounding area.* East, the overgrown bank with goose-grass and nettles. North, willow scrub forming a copse often standing in a few feet of water. West, rough grass and low herbage over the old workings with *Juncus* in the moist places. South, pasture round the Mill.
- (10) *Type of soil and subsoil.* Soil of dry parts of the pit is silt from the gravel washings. Subsoil of the pit is alluvium. Subsoil of the old gravel workings is glacial gravel with Bunter pebbles.
- (11) *Whether open to the Public.* Private ground with a public right of way along the western margin. It is much frequented and unfortunately there is a great deal of disturbance to a limited extent by fishermen but mainly by small boys.
- (12) *Proximity of other sheets of water.* Nearest is Old Parkbury,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile eastward.
- (13) *General surroundings.* Rural, pasture and arable—a shallow valley with water meadows.

4. *Walton-upon-Thames, Surrey.*

- (1) *Location.* Vice County 17 (Surrey). South of Walton Reservoir and west of Island Barn Reservoir ((Metropolitan Water Board). National Grid Map Ref.: 51/123675.

- (2) Area. (a) Of water. Seven pits of total of approximately 77.5 acres.
- (b) Of surrounding ground. 180 acres.
- Total 257.5 acres, approximately.
- (3) Age of pits. Unknown, in spite of intensive enquiries.
- (4) Method of working and if disused when last worked. Removal of sand and gravel in progress at only one pit, all work on the others has been discontinued for a number of years.

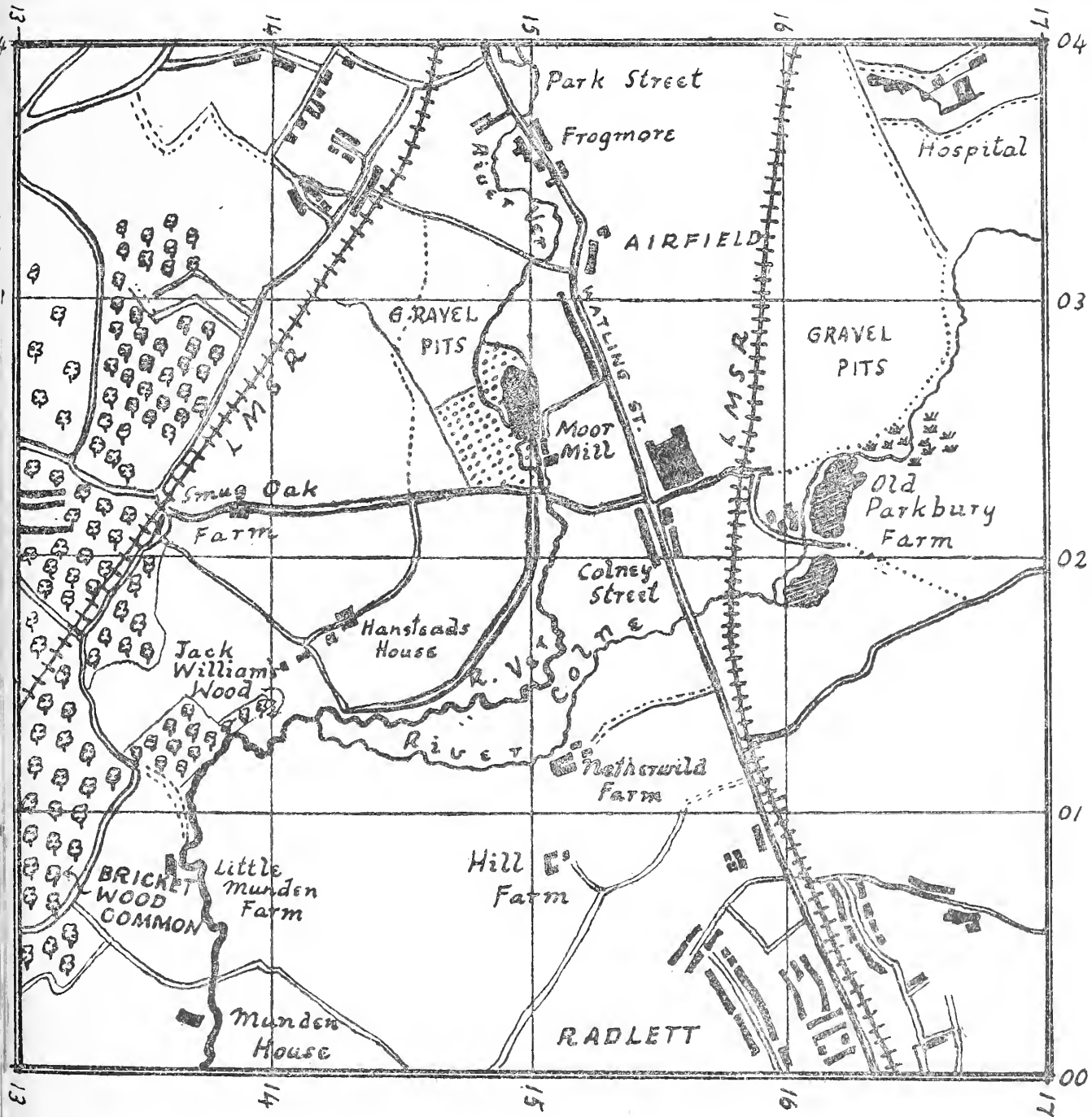


Fig. 3. Moor Mill (Hertfordshire).

- (5) *Depth of water.* Varies from 5 feet to 30 feet in the different pits.
- (6) *Nature of sides and banks.* Precipitous to, or almost to, water level, occasionally with flat shelf just above normal water level. Sloping steeply under water.
- (7) *Whether fish present.* Roach, Perch and Three-spined Stickleback.
- (8) *Whether used for dumping of refuse.* Dumping of trade and domestic refuse in progress on small scale at one pit only during 1950 and 1951.
- (9) *Description of vegetation.*
  - (a) In the pit itself. All pits contain luxurious growths of aquatic plants, including Common Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) and Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*). Small beds of *Typha* occur along margins of all pits.
  - (b) Of surrounding area. Rough grassland with the wild plants usually associated with it. The area is intersected with hedges and ditches, the former of hawthorn, bramble, scrub elm, willow, sallow and alder. Several areas of mixed scrub woodland and undergrowth occur, one marshy with a growth of *Typha* in the centre—with scrub osier and willow dominant. In 1948 agricultural work was commenced in the area between some of the pits and this has been so extended that in 1950 practically the only uncultivated land is a narrow strip along the banks of all pits and at unevenly surfaced raised areas bordering the survey area. Root and corn crops are grown. The only large trees are elms situated for the most part on the edges of the area.
- (10) *Type of soil and subsoil.* High and Low Level gravel. Deposits rarely above 20 feet in thickness of various ages from the Glacial period. Chief pebbles are chalk flints.
- (11) *Whether private or open to the public.* Accessible to the public and the area is used for horse riding and some grazing of horses; fishing is very popular and anglers line the banks during week-ends except during the close season, i.e., 14th March to 16th June; shooting takes place during winter; bathing occasionally: small boys roam the area, occasionally carrying air guns. A second class road runs through the area.
- (12) *Proximity of other sheets of water.* Walton Reservoir immediately to the north; Island Barn Reservoir about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to east; River Mole from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 mile east.
- (13) *General surroundings.* Permanent and temporary buildings and dwellings are close to the boundaries of the area on the north-east, east and west sides; north is Walton Reservoir and south open market garden land and a football ground.

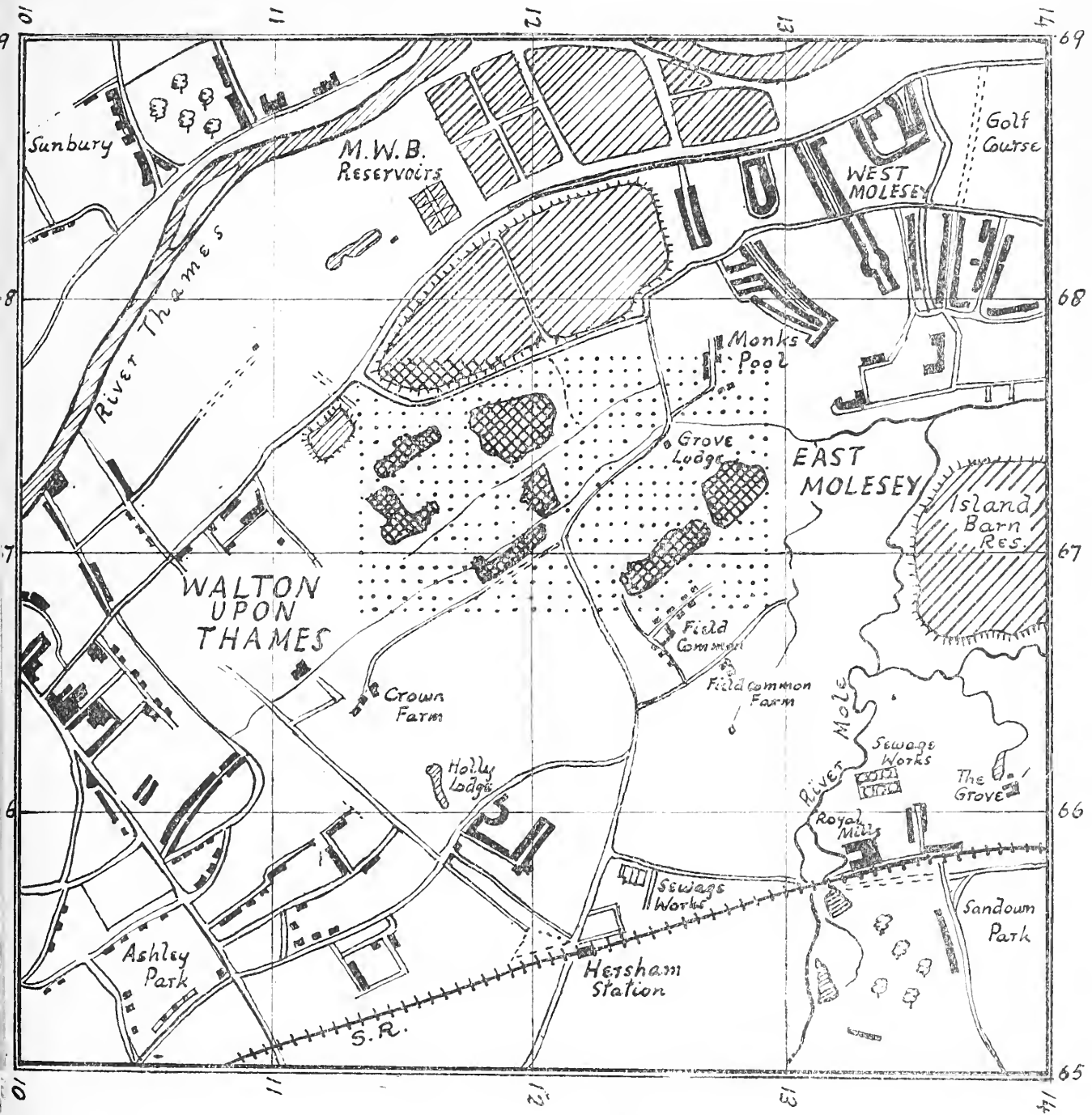


Fig. 4. Walton (Surrey).

The detailed information set out above for the four pits may now be summarised. The pits are located as follows:—Feltham 16 miles west, Mayesbrook Park 9 miles north-east, Moor Mill 17 miles north-west, and Walton 15 miles south-west of the centre of London. The area of water ranges from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  to  $77\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and of the surrounding land from 23 to 180 acres; the depth of water ranges from 6 to 30 feet, but at Moor Mill the water is very shallow over much of the area. The age of the pits, so far as can be ascertained, is from 15 to 26 years. At two of the pits the sides are perpendicular and 3 to 8 feet high; at the other two they are shelving. At Walton there is a flat shelf of varying width just above water level.

Reservoirs, gravel pits and other bodies of water exist near all the pits. Apart from this, the general surroundings vary considerably, two being in largely built up areas and two in more open rural surroundings. All are on private ground, but no effort is made to keep out the public and there is a good deal of disturbance.

#### METHOD

*Personnel.* The Survey was carried out by four members of the Society, one at each pit or group of pits, with the following teams of observers:—

*Feltham.* Miss N. Goom assisted by J. A. Bailey, L. Baker, J. S. S. Beesley, C. P. Castell (help with geology), Mrs. J. W. Davies (help with botany), K. V. Elphinstone, Miss E. M. Goom, R. W. Hayman, C. Hughes, H. O. Jones, Miss E. McEwen, A. N. Norkett (identification of Algae), D. C. Pegram, R. H. M. Ryall, B. A. Richards, T. Sayers, W. G. Teagle. Two non-members, G. Binks and D. T. Rogers.

*Mayesbrook Park.* H. E. Andrews assisted by K. Barrett, D. Safaty, D. Summers, and H. Tarrant.

*Moor Mill.* W. D. Melluish assisted by M. G. Ridpath, P. E. L. Simmonds, S. H. Singleton, Prof. E. H. Warmington, Dr. W. H. D. Wince, and D. K. Wood.

*Walton-upon-Thames.* K. P. Keywood assisted by P. W. E. Currie, W. G. Ellis, D. E. Hall, R. J. Harrison, R. C. Hodgson, J. M. McMeeking, D. Parr, Dr. A. G. G. Thompson, J. S. Wightman and J. A. Wigzell.

*Observation.* Regular visits were paid to the areas throughout the period, as shown in the following table:—

Pit	Number of Visits.			Total visits
	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	
Feltham .....	33	35	42	110
Mayesbrook Park .....	70+	?	—	70+
Moor Mill .....	52	77	43	172
Walton .....	17	52	38	107
	<hr/>			
Total visits .....	172	164	123	459+

The duration of the visits varied from two to three hours.

*Photographs.* Topographical photographs were taken of the pits and their surroundings, in some cases both in summer and winter.

*Mapping.* Field maps were issued to observers in some of the areas and breeding and nest sites were marked.

An analysis of the records covering the three years from 1st April 1948 to 31st March 1951 is now attempted. Unfortunately in 1949 observations at Mayesbrook Park were severely curtailed, owing mainly to the action of the local authorities, who threw the gravel pit open to the public as a boating lake and 'Lido', and partly to the fact that the leader, H. E. Andrews, was prevented by illness from continuing

the organisation of the work for some time. Records from this area therefore refer only to the first two seasons.

Notes. (1) In this paper the vernacular names used are those of B.O.U. Check List (1952), amended *B.B.*, 46, pp. 1-3.

(2) For the purpose of the tables, the 'breeding season' is taken as covering the five months April to August, and 'outside the breeding season' the months September to March.

## 1. POPULATION IN THE BREEDING SEASON

The population in the breeding season falls readily into two main categories, the nesting community and the birds which visit the gravel pits, either for resting or feeding—some of these breeding some distance away—or as migrants on spring passage.

*Breeding Pairs.* Table 1 shows the number of breeding pairs at Feltham, Moor Mill and Walton during the three seasons of 1948/1950 and at Mayesbrook Park in 1948 and 1949, the figures in brackets indicating those known to have been unsuccessful. The presence of a singing male was not regarded as a sure sign of breeding and some more definite evidence, such as that of an adult feeding young, was required for each record in cases where the actual nest could not be discovered. Gridded field maps were used by observers in recording nesting activities and plotting nest sites.

While some 40 species attempted to breed in all the areas during the period of the survey, Feltham attracted an average of 21 per season, Walton 16.6, Moor Mill 16.3 and Mayesbrook Park 14.5, the combined average being approximately 17 species. If we consider frequency of occurrence, it will be seen that only three species bred regularly in all the areas, namely reed bunting, skylark, and yellow wagtail. Also present in all areas, but nesting irregularly in the seasons studied, were linnet, sedge warbler, whitethroat, blackbird, mallard, tufted duck, moorhen and coot. In addition tree sparrow, and partridge were recorded as breeding in two or three years at three out of the four pits.

Turning to the numerical aspect, we see that, apart from the house sparrow, which is separately discussed, five species were much more abundant than the remainder. These were skylark (61 pairs), reed bunting (59 pairs), reed warbler (45 pairs), moorhen (37 pairs), and tree sparrow (34 pairs).

At Mayesbrook Park there were 24 pairs of reed warblers in 1948 and 20 in 1949. As the colony occupied only about 15 acres, this would seem to have been an unusually dense concentration; in 1948 an intensive study of nesting results was undertaken, both of the reed warblers and of the other species, a daily visit to all known nest sites being aimed at. 114 nests were located, representing 86 pairs, of 16 species. Of these, 33 nests representing 24 pairs were of reed warblers. The average hatching success for all nests was 55.2% and fledging success was 88.5%.

Hatching success for reed warblers was 78.4% and fledging success was 81%. Owing to lack of space it is unfortunately impossible to publish the full figures here, but a copy of the figures, together with all data, has been placed in the Society's library.

TABLE I.

Numbers of breeding pairs.

	Feltham.			Mayesbrook Park.			Moor Mill.			Walton.		
	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1948	1949	1950	1948	1949	1950	
Greenfinch	1	2 (1)	1								3	
Goldfinch	1	2	1								3	
Linnet	2	7	6	6 (2)	2			1			5	
Chaffinch	1					1	1	1			2 1	
Yellowhammer	1	1	1					1			3	
Reed Bunting	7	4	8	11 (3)	5	3	4	4	3	6	4	
House Sparrow	10	10	10									
Tree Sparrow	6	10	10					1	1	2	2	
Skylark	5	6	6	8 (4)	6	1	1	1	9	10	8	
Meadow Pipit		1							6	4	3	
Yellow Wagtail	3	3	1	4 (3)	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	
Pied Wagtail	1	1	1					1		1		
Great Tit	1	1	1									
Blue Tit			1					1				
Long-tailed Tit							(1)					
Red-backed Shrike									1			
Spotted Flycatcher								1				
Willow Warbler									1	1	1	
Reed Warbler				24 (5)	20	2	2	1				
Sedge Warbler	(1)	(1)	1		1	3	4	4	1		1	
Whitethroat	6	2	3		1		1	1	1	3	2	
Song Thrush	1	1	2	2								
Blackbird	2	4	4	(1)	3		1	1			1	
Whinchat							2					
Robin	1			(1)								
Hedge Sparrow		2				(1)						
Cuckoo									1	1	1	
Kestrel							1					
Mute Swan				(1)						(2)		
Mallard	1		(1)	4 (3)		1	2	1			1	
Tufted Duck	1			1	2	1					1	
Gt. Crested Grebe	(2)		(1)	1	(1)					(2)		
Little Grebe				4	4						1	
Woodpigeon				(1)			1					
Snipe							1	1				
Little Ringed Plover	1											
Lapwing									2	5		
Moorhen	2		(1)	10 (3)	12	2	4	3	1	1	1	
Coot	(2)		1	7 (1)	5	(1)	1	1		1	1	
Partridge	1	(1)				1	1	1	2	4	2	
Number of pairs	60	60	61	86	64	18	31	26	33	62	34	
(unsuccessful)	(5)	(3)	(3)	(28)	(?)	(2)	(1)	—	—	(4)	—	
Number of species	24	19	20	16	13	12	19	18	13	20	17	
(unsuccessful)	(3)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(1)	—	—	(2)	—	

Grand Total of Breeding Species—40.



In each year at Feltham at least ten pairs of house sparrows shared with tree sparrows an unusual nesting site in the underside of a gravel conveyor attached to a storage tower, occupying holes in the woodwork and apparently quite unconcerned at the constant noisy passage of gravel but a few inches away from their nests. Since the house sparrow is not recorded as nesting at the other three survey areas, however, we cannot include it in our list of typical species. The great crested grebe made sporadic attempts to breed at Feltham, Mayesbrook Park and Walton, but was successful only once: failure was due either to the eggs being taken by boys or to nests becoming waterlogged. At Moor Mill, although ample cover was provided by reeds, the acreage of water was probably less than the minimum necessary to attract and support a pair, the species only being seen there as a winter vagrant.

We may now consider the ecological associations presented by the four survey areas, which are broadly divisible into two types, differing radically from each other, and contained by the flooded gravel pits themselves and the ground immediately surrounding them.

These are referred to as:—

- (a) *the water*, with varying growth of aquatic vegetation, including reeds, rushes and sedges, occasional scrub willows and a few small islands; and
- (b) *the surrounding ground*, of mixed character, consisting partly of waste and partly of cultivated land. Where the rough surface of former gravel workings has been left derelict, either a dense herbage or coarse grasses cover the humps and ditches. Here and there are stagnant pools sometimes overgrown with *juncus*, large colonies of plants such as rose-bay willow herb and scentless mayweed, and bushes of hawthorn, bramble, elder, osiers and the like, which in some places are associated as small copses and hedges. Ploughing and cultivation of part of the waste land has been carried out at Feltham and Walton and the former also contains a neglected orchard.

Of the total area studied, the proportion covered by water is about 30%, the figures being:—

			Acreage of water	Acreage of surrounding ground
Feltham	...	...	30	60
Mayesbrook Park	...	...	15.1	35.9
Moor Mill	...	...	6.5	23
Walton	...	...	77.5	180
			<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	...	...	129.1	298.9
Proportion of total area			30.2%	69.8%
Total area			428 acres	

We have mentioned some sixteen species and if we exclude the House Sparrow for reasons previously stated, the remaining fifteen may be regarded as characteristic of our four survey areas.

They are divided as to their habitat preferences between these two ecological associations as shown in the list that follows. Only the Reed Bunting does not discriminate and so appears in both columns.

(a) <i>The water</i>	(b) <i>The surrounding ground</i>
Reed Bunting	Linnet
Reed Warbler	Reed Bunting
Sedge Warbler	Tree Sparrow
Mallard	Skylark
Tufted Duck	Yellow Wagtail
Great Crested Grebe	Whitethroat
Moorhen	Blackbird
Coot	Partridge

*Other breeding species.* The remaining 24 species shown in Table 1 occur rather less frequently, although it is noteworthy that four of these bred each year at one particular area, occurring only very occasionally elsewhere. These were the yellow hammer and pied wagtail at Feltham, the little grebe at Mayesbrook Park and the willow warbler at Walton. From Feltham in 1948 came the single nesting record of little ringed plover; and the spotted flycatcher, whinchat and snipe bred only at Moor Mill.

#### BREEDING POPULATION

An analysis of the distribution of the breeding population between the two ecological associations referred to above gives the following results:—

	Feltham	Mayesbrook Park	Moor Mill	Walton
Average No. of pairs ...	60.3	75	25	43
Pairs per 10 acres .....	6.4	15	8.3	1.65
Average No. of pairs at water .....	11.3	56.5 (34.5)	14.6	9
Pairs per 10 acres water	3.76	37.6 (23)	22.6	1.2
Average No. of pairs elsewhere .....	49	18.5	10.4	34
Pairs per 10 acres land	8.16	5.4	4.5	1.88

In this table the reed bunting has, for simplicity, been treated as a bird associated with water. In addition to the species referred to above, mute swan and little grebe have been included in the water birds. The figures in brackets for Mayesbrook Park are the total without reed warblers.

It will be seen that the density of population of the birds associated with water is considerably greater at Mayesbrook Park and Moor Mill than at the other two pits, and that, if the reed warbler is excluded, the figures for these birds are very similar at Mayesbrook Park and Moor Mill. This may be associated with the more gently sloping banks and better cover at these two pits. The figures for birds other than those associated with water are much closer, though it is not unexpected that Walton, where the surrounding country is more open and presents less nesting cover, has a lower density than the other three.

## NON-BREEDING SUMMER VISITORS.

In addition to the breeding birds some 66 species, in all, visited the survey areas during the summer months, attracted by the stretches of water and the cover provided by the reeds or the vegetation of their banks, the scrub trees and surrounding grassy or cultivated land. About nine-tenths of these could be found nesting in nearby localities and were frequently seen on foraging expeditions. Whilst hirundines and swift hawked over the water for insects, common snipe, lapwing and common sandpiper searched for food in the shallows and muddy patches or idled on the gently sloping banks. Heron and kingfisher were recorded at all areas and mallard, teal, common pochard and tufted duck also used the waters for feeding and resting. Walton was visited by five species of gull in summer, including the British lesser black-backed gull, which flew over from the neighbouring reservoir to rest and preen, when undisturbed. In high summer finches fed on the ripening seeds of grasses, thistles and other plants, but the three woodpeckers listed must be regarded as vagrants and were not typical of the gravel pits scene. In Table II. the summer non-breeding population is given in two categories, in order roughly to differentiate between regular and occasional visitors, as indicated in the headings.

TABLE II.  
Summer Visitors.

(a) *Species occurring in at least two of the three years of the survey.*

FELTHAM	MOOR MILL	WALTON
Carrion Crow	Carrion Crow	Carrion Crow
	Jackdaw	
	Starling	Starling
	Greenfinch	Greenfinch
	Goldfinch	Goldfinch
	Linnet	Chaffinch
	Yellowhammer	Yellow Bunting
	House Sparrow	House Sparrow
	Tree Sparrow	
	Pied Wagtail	Pied Wagtail
	Great Tit	Great Tit
	Blue Tit	
	Spotted Flycatcher	
Willow Warbler	Willow Warbler	
	Sedge Warbler	
	Mistle Thrush	
	Song Thrush	Blackbird
	Robin	
	Hedge Sparrow	Hedge Sparrow
	Wren	Wren
Swallow	Swallow	Swallow
House Martin	House Martin	House Martin
Sand Martin	Sand Martin	Sand Martin
Swift	Swift	Swift
	Kingfisher	Kestrel
	Green Woodpecker	Sparrow Hawk
	Great Spotted Wood- pecker	Heron
		Mute Swan

Kestrel		Mallard
		Pochard
		Tufted Duck
		Gt. Crested Grebe
		Little Grebe
		Woodpigeon
	Stock Dove	Stock Dove
Turtle Dove	Turtle Dove	Common Sandpiper
	Snipe	
	Lapwing	Lapwing
		Black-headed Gull
		Common Gull
		Herring Gull

(b) *Species recorded in one season, or on one or two occasions only.*

FELTHAM	MOOR MILL	WALTON
	Rook	Rook
	Magpie	Jackdaw
Chaffinch	Redpoll	Bullfinch
Corn Bunting		Corn Bunting
	Treecreeper	Grey Wagtail
	Marsh Tit	Blue Tit
	Whitethroat	
	Lesser Spotted	Chiffchaff
	Woodpecker	Song Thrush
	Tawny Owl	Robin
Kingfisher		Kingfisher
Cuckoo		Green Woodpecker
Heron		Little Owl
Mallard	Teal	Teal
Tufted Duck		
Gt. Crested Grebe	Jack Snipe	?Br. Lesser Black-backed
Woodpigeon		Gull
Lapwing		Great Black-backed Gull
Red-legged Partridge	Red-legged Partridge	

It will be seen that some of the birds listed have already been included in Table I, as breeders. This may occur when a species visited an area each summer but did not nest in all three seasons, and also when building just outside the arbitrarily chosen boundary but seeking food within the survey area, as in the case of sedge warblers at Moor Mill. Here there was usually a colony of four or five pairs, of which perhaps only three bred inside the area but shared the marsh as a feeding ground with the others whose nesting territories were a hundred yards or so distant. Among species recorded only occasionally, the corn bunting was seen both at Feltham and Walton and red-legged partridge at Feltham and Moor Mill, where a wintering jack snipe stayed on into the early summer of 1949.

*Spring migrants.* From the last days of March until well into May of each year there was a passage of migrants through the areas.

Some, such as the willow warbler, could be seen flitting from bush to bush, now and then taking insects on the wing, but maintaining a general direction and moving on in a short while. Others were recorded once or twice and were gone.

Walton had the greatest variety with 16 species listed, but there was a fairly even distribution and it will be seen in Table III. that eight, out of the total of 26 species, were common to all three places. That the figures for Moor Mill bear comparison with the other gravel pits of much greater extent is no doubt due to its geographical situation, being close to the confluence of the two rivers, Ver and Colne, the valley of the latter stream especially having become a route used regularly by birds on passage.

TABLE III.  
*Migrants on Spring passage.*  
1948-1950

FELTHAM	MOOR MILL	WALTON
	Tree Pipit	
Meadow Pipit	Meadow Pipit	Meadow Pipit
	Red-backed Shrike	
Chiffchaff	Chiffchaff	Chiffchaff
Willow Warbler	Willow Warbler	Willow Warbler
		Garden Warbler
	Lesser Whitethroat	
Wheatear	Wheatear	Wheatear
		Greenland Wheatear
	Redstart	Whinchat
Swallow	Swallow	Swallow
	House Martin	House Martin
Sand Martin	Sand Martin	Sand Martin
Cuckoo	Swift	Swift
	Wryneck	
Pochard		Tufted Duck
Great Crested Grebe		
		Curlew
Common Sandpiper	Common Sandpiper	Common Sandpiper
Redshank	Redshank	Redshank
Ringed Plover		
Golden Plover		Black Tern
Number of Species		
Spring migrants :	13	15
Grand total of species :		16

## 2. CONGREGATIONS AND ROOSTS IN LATE SUMMER AND AUTUMN.

From high summer onwards into autumn, congregations of birds were recorded in all areas. They were usually of one species only, of normally gregarious or colonial roosting habits. But the three *hirundines* were associated together and sometimes pied and yellow wag-tails joined company. Most of the gatherings contained juveniles, but in the main the birds were visitors and additional to the local family parties. Some, at least as species, were temporarily resident for periods of up to two months, whilst others appeared sporadically or only on a single occasion.

The gatherings at Feltham were smaller and included fewer species than those of the other areas, suggesting that the population at this gravel pit tended to remain at a fairly constant level without large incursions from outside. At Moor Mill the dense reed beds were used for roosting by starlings, meadow pipits, pied and yellow wagtails, swallows and sand martins at various times, as well as by the local breeding community. A convenient electric power cable, suspended from wooden posts and stretching over the 'lake', formed an attractive perching place for parties of up to a hundred *hirundines* and for flights of starlings, these communal gatherings preparatory to entering the roost being a feature of late summer and autumn evenings.

Whilst the focal point of attraction at Moor Mill was the *phragmites* bed, many of the Walton records show the influence of its cultivated land in providing food for visiting flocks of lapwings, black-headed gulls and other species. A flock of 500 house sparrows seen in August 1948, which is the largest count of any single species made during the survey, clearly owed its presence in the hedgerow to the prospect of rich gleanings from the adjacent oats stubble.

It was evident that, from July onward and as the breeding pattern waned, parties of birds from outside the gravel pits and their immediate surroundings were attracted into them, both to find food by day and to roost by night, although these movements were noticed to a lesser degree at Feltham than at the other two areas studied. Some of the aggregations were from nearby breeding haunts—sand martins from exposed gravel cliffs, swallows and house martins from farms or cottages—but pied wagtails roosting at Moor Mill in 1950 dropped into the reeds in half a dozen flights of 25 to 30 birds, approaching one after the other at short intervals: they used a regular fly line and in view of the number accumulating probably came from a considerable distance.

### 3. SPECIES ON PASSAGE IN AUTUMN.

Table IV. shows the autumn migrants recorded. There were twenty-three species—rather less than in spring—and twelve, which are in italics, were seen on the return movement.

Passage through the gravel pits began in the second week of July and continued until early November. Moor Mill was in greater favour as a temporary halting place—especially for waders—than either Feltham or Walton, being further from any extensively built-up area and, again, because of its situation close to the valley of the River Colne. Movement along this migration route was nicely demonstrated in one particular instance, when a little ringed plover was seen at the Hertfordshire pit a few minutes after having been disturbed, half a mile upstream, from the margins of flooded gravel workings at Old Parkbury, the nearest adjacent water.

Feltham was visited by sandwich and common, or Arctic terns, and the extensive ponds at Walton attracted a raft of pochard, the only species of duck listed.

TABLE IV.  
*Migrants on Autumn passage*  
1948-1959.

FELTHAM	MOOR MILL	WALTON
Linnet		
Meadow Pipit	Meadow Pipit	Meadow Pipit
Grey Wagtail		
	Chiffchaff	
	Willow Warbler	
	Wheatear	
	Whinchat	
Swallow	Swallow	Swallow
House Martin	House Martin	House Martin
Sand Martin	Sand Martin	Sand Martin
	Swift	Swift
		Pochard
	Dunlin	
	Ruff	
Common Sandpiper	Common Sandpiper	Common Sandpiper
	Wood Sandpiper	
	Green Sandpiper	
		Redshank
	Greenshank	
	Ringed Plover	
	Little Ringed Plover	
Sandwich Tern		
Common/Arctic Tern		
Number of species of Autumn migrants: 9	17	8
Grand Total of species: 23		

4. POPULATION OUTSIDE THE BREEDING SEASON.

To obtain a comprehensive picture of the population outside the breeding season we have listed in Table V. all records dating from the beginning of September to the end of the succeeding March during the period of the survey, except that migrants as individuals are not again shown in the table nor are they included in the subsequent discussion. To give an impression of the order of numbers of birds found at the gravel pits during winter we have listed after each species the maximum individual count recorded.

TABLE V.

*Species resident in, or visiting the areas, outside the breeding season.*

(A) Resident as species.

FELTHAM	MOOR MILL	WALTON
		Rook 85
	Starling 204	
Greenfinch 30	Greenfinch 1	Greenfinch 100
Goldfinch 10	Goldfinch 35	Goldfinch 10
Linnet 80		Linnet 19
Chaffinch 12	Chaffinch 25	Chaffinch N
	Yellow Bunting 15	
Reed Bunting 4	Reed Bunting 4	Reed Bunting 7
Tree Sparrow 35		

Skylark	17			Skylark	60
Meadow Pipit	20	Meadow Pipit	42	Meadow Pipit	50
		Grey Wagtail	1		
Pied Wagtail	3	Pied Wagtail	160		
Blackbird	4	Blackbird	6	Blackbird	4
				Stonechat	3
Robin	4	Robin	2	Robin	3
Hedge Sparrow	2	Hedge Sparrow	1		
		Wren	1	Wren	2
		Great Spotted			
		Woodpecker	1		
		Mute Swan	2	Mute Swan	4
		Mallard	9	Mallard	22
				Pochard	140
Tufted Duck	5			Tufted Duck	62
				Sniew	17
Snipe	1	Snipe	28		
		Jack Snipe	4		
				Lapwing	350
Black-headed Gull	20			Black-headed Gull	300
		Water Rail	2		
Moorhen	6	Moorhen	35		
Coot	14	Coot	2	Coot	41
Partridge	18	Partridge	13	Partridge	7
Total Resident					
Species	18	22		21	
Combined total					
Resident Species	32				

## (B) Regular visitors for feeding, resting and roosting.

FELTHAM		MOOR MILL		WALTON	
Carrion Crow	3	Carrion Crow	1	Carrion Crow	52
Starling	60			Starling	50
House Sparrow	N			House Sparrow	500
				Pied Wagtail	1
Great Tit	2				
Blue Tit	10			Fieldfare	80
		Kingfisher	1	Kingfisher	2
Kestrel	1	Kestrel	1	Kestrel	3
Heron	2	Heron	5	Heron	2
Mute Swan	2				
		Teal	60		
				Gt. Crested Grebe	4
				Little Grebe	40
				Woodpigeon	20
				Stock Dove	200
				Snipe	2
		Lapwing	300		
				Herring Gull	100
				Lesser Black-backed	
				Gull	12

## (C) Occasional visitors and vagrants.

FELTHAM		MOOR MILL		WALTON	
		Rook	1	Jackdaw	2
		Magpie	4	Magpie	1
		Redpoll	4		
		Linnet	30		



Brambling	1		Bullfinch	3	
Yellowhammer	3		Brambling	7	
		House Sparrow	7	Yellowhammer	3
		Tree Sparrow	16	Tree Sparrow	2
Grey Wagtail	1	Skylark	8	Grey Wagtail	1
				Great Tit	1
		Blue Tit	2	Blue Tit	1
Goldcrest	1			Coal Tit	1
Fieldfare	3	Fieldfare	1		
Mistle Thrush	2			Hedge Sparrow	1
Song Thrush	1	Song Thrush	1		
Redwing	1	Redwing	1	Green Woodpecker	1
Stonechat	1				
Wren	1				
Kingfisher	1				
Great Spotted- Woodpecker	1	Little Owl	1		
		Sparrow Hawk	1		
Mallard	4			Teal	38
Teal	3			Wigeon	29
Pochard	15	Gt. Crested Grebe	1		
Smew	5				
Little Grebe	2	Woodpigeon	6		
Stock Dove	6	Stock Dove	1		
		Woodcock	1	Common Sandpiper	1
		Green Sandpiper	1		
Golden Plover	140	Golden Plover	25		
Lapwing	N	Grey Plover	1		
Common Gull	5	Black-headed Gull	20		
Herring Gull	10	Common Gull	1	Common Gull	5
				Gt. Black-backed Gull	22
				Moorhen	2
Pheasant	1				
Total Visiting Species	31		28		33
Combined Total Visiting Species		56			
Total Winter Species	49		50		54
Combined Total Winter Species		69			

Notes: 1. Numbers after specific names indicate maximum individual counts.  
2. N. = numerous.

As in summer there were resident sedentary communities, augmented by visitors from the surrounding country, which came in for varying

lengths of time to rest, feed and sometimes to roost. Sixty-nine species were listed, for Feltham, Moor Mill and Walton, thirty-two being resident during the winter months. There was no great difference in numbers of species between the three areas, residents ranging from 18 at Feltham to 22 at Moor Mill and visitors from 31 at Feltham to 33 at Walton. But there were many differences in status to account for the fact that although we have distinguished 32 species as resident and 56 as visiting, the total covered is no more than 69. The variety of birds was a little less than in summer, when there were 40 resident species and an overall total of seventy-eight. Some of the winter visitors appeared quite regularly, for example the heron, for early morning fishing, but others were only seen occasionally, and Table V has been divided into sections in order to show these differences in status.

Among the residents, nine species were common to all the gravel pits and, perhaps, may, therefore, be regarded as the typical winter birds to be seen on almost all visits of observers:—greenfinch, goldfinch, chaffinch, reed bunting, meadow pipit, blackbird, robin, coot, partridge.

In addition, at Walton and Feltham the black-headed gull was prominent, but at Moor Mill, although frequently recorded, its status was that of winter visitor, birds probably dividing their time between this area and the neighbouring Old Parkbury waters. The numbers of black-headed gulls seen at Walton were not inconsiderable, a total of 24 counts made during the winter months reaching 1658, with an average figure of 69. The moorhen also was resident in two areas but a visitor to the third, a few only being recorded at Walton, evidently owing to lack of sufficient suitable cover. Counts of up to 35 were obtained at Moor Mill, where the birds habitually left the sanctuary of the reeds to feed on grassy slopes west of the marsh. Moorhens were also seen fairly regularly at Feltham, if in smaller numbers.

Snipe were characteristic of Moor Mill in winter, especially in hard weather when one could often flush wisps of a couple of dozen, sometimes with two or three jack snipe, from the reeds. The larger species was also resident in small numbers at Feltham, but Walton has only a few listed in Section (B) of the Table.

It will be seen that there was much variety among the winter visitors, only carrion crow, kestrel and heron having been recorded in all areas. Rather unexpectedly the fieldfare and redwing are classed as vagrants at Feltham and Moor Mill, with only one or two appearances. Fieldfare, however, were regular visitors to Walton, the largest flock totalling 80, but the redwing was not seen at this area at any time during the survey.

*Numbers of birds.* Table VI, gives details of the total number of individual birds counted during the September/March periods of the three years 1948 to 1951 set out under area headings.

Limitation of space prevents the inclusion in this paper of a complete table of occurrences, as records of nearly 170 counts are available. Counts of six birds or less have been ignored in the table as not being representative of normal conditions. Sometimes these very small numbers were

due to exceptionally bad weather when birds remained in cover, and at others to the observer's preoccupation with some special task other than that of census work or simply to insufficient available time.

TABLE VI.  
*Numbers of birds—outside the breeding season.*

	FELTHAM		MOOR MILL		WALTON	
	No. of visits	Birds counted	No. of visits	Birds counted	No. of visits	Birds counted
1948/9	14	1280	22	1294	10	1648
1949/50	13	1241	22	1796	25	4798
1950/51	24	1910	14	987	18	1536
Total of visits	51		58		53	
Total of birds		4431		4077		7982
Average winter population		87		70		150
<b>GRAND TOTALS :</b>						
Visits		162				
Birds		16,490				
Average population		307				

A decline in population from the level of the breeding season would probably be expected in view of the reduction in available food and the departure of summer migrants with their broods. Some species, however, increased their numbers considerably in winter and there were occasionally visiting flocks of a fair size. Counts of mallard, teal, pochard and tufted duck were larger than in summer and there were many more lapwing, black-headed and herring gulls, especially at Walton. Other comparatively large counts, in addition to those previously mentioned, were 140 golden plover at Feltham and 200 stock doves at Walton. There was a roost of 300 lapwing at Moor Mill for a short time, but apart from this the largest number at this area occurred in early autumn when migrants were gathering together before setting off on passage and there were roosts of pied wagtails (160), sand martins and swallows (100) and starlings (204). Snipe increased from one breeding family to a maximum of 29 and moorhen from three or four pairs to about 35. At Feltham and Walton mixed flocks of finches were frequent, with counts of up to 80 linnets and 100 greefinches

##### 5. CONTROL AREAS.

After the study had been in progress for almost two years, it was thought desirable to attempt a parallel investigation at a control area, near to each of the survey areas, which would consist of a tract of land as similar as possible to the survey ground, but containing no gravel pits. A comparison of the population at survey and control areas would then indicate the influence that the digging of the pits, their subsequent flooding and the attendant growth of vegetation, have had on the local avifauna.

Unfortunately, some difficulty was experienced in dealing fully with the extra work involved, and records sufficient for analysis are available only for Moor Mill. The data accumulated do not form an entirely comprehensive picture of the population of the Control Area concerned, as full breeding results were not obtained and information as to the number of birds outside the breeding season is a little scanty. However, enough visits were made to ascertain the variety of species present during 1950, the number of nesting pairs and other useful details. The results of this additional study may now be briefly discussed.

*Description.* The Moor Mill Control Area consisted of some 30 acres of river valley, situated about a mile downstream from the survey area. The northern boundary lies at the confluence of the rivers Ver and Colne, whence the two streams flow southward across flat, grass-covered meadows, which are bordered by a narrow strip of mixed woodland rising steeply from the valley on the western side, and on the eastern by a field of permanent grass which slopes more gently upward to extensive arable lands. Separating this pasture from the water meadows is a matured hedgerow of thorns with small oak and holly trees and a few elder, sloe and rose bushes.

Thus the main topographical features of the control area have their counterparts in the survey ground. Each is traversed by a clean, swiftly-flowing river; the strip of woodland corresponds to a row of elms at the edge of old gravel workings at Moor Mill; both have a well-grown hedgerow containing some hedge trees; and whilst the pasture of the control area may be compared with the dry grassy wastes of the worked-out diggings of the survey area, the water meadows of the former take the place of the flooded gravel pit and associated marsh of the latter.

*Population in the Breeding Season.* Although it involves the repetition of part of the detail already given in Table I., a comparison of the breeding populations of Survey and Control Areas is undoubtedly better shown in tabular form than in any other way, and in Table VII. the number of pairs nesting at the Control Area in 1950 and at the Survey Area for each year of the study are listed.

TABLE VII.  
*Numbers of Breeding Pairs at Moor Mill.*

Survey Area.					Control Area.			
					1948	1949	1950	1950
Rook	...	...	...	...	—	—	—	35
Linnet	...	...	...	...	—	—	1	1
Chaffinch	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	1
Yellowhammer	...	...	...	...	—	1	—	2
Reed Bunting	...	...	...	...	3	4	4	—
Tree Sparrow	...	...	...	...	—	1	1	1
Sky Lark	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	2
Yellow Wagtail	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	—
Pied Wagtail	...	...	...	...	—	—	1	—
Blue Tit	...	...	...	...	—	—	1	1
Spotted Flycatcher	...	...	...	...	—	—	1	—

	Survey Area.				Control Area.	
	1948	1949	1950	1950		
Reed Warbler	2	2	1	—		
Sedge Warbler	3	4	4	—		
Whitethroat	—	1	1	1		
Blackbird	—	1	1	1		
Whinchat	—	2	—	—		
Robin	—	—	—	1		
Hedge Sparrow	1	—	—	1		
Wren	—	—	—	1		
Kestrel	—	1	—	—		
Mallard	1	2	1	—		
Tufted Duck	1	—	—	—		
Woodpigeon	—	1	—	1		
Snipe	—	1	1	—		
Moorhen	2	4	3	2		
Coot	1	1	1	—		
Partridge	1	1	1	1		
Number of Pairs	18	30	26	52		
Number of Species	12	18	18	15		

The presence of the rook in comparatively large numbers is due to a special circumstance. The strip of woodland, referred to above, forms a part of Jack William's Wood, adjoining the well-known Bricket Wood Scrubs, which has for many years harboured an extensive rookery, used also as a winter roost by some hundreds of these birds in consort with jackdaws. In 1950 about 35 pairs nested in the portion of the wood included in the Control Area. In addition to these there were some 17 pairs of 14 other species.

The rook, robin and wren occurred at the Control Area only and the following 12 species only at the Survey Area, those that were well established as regular breeders being given in italics:—

<i>Reed Bunting</i>	Whinchat
<i>Yellow Wagtail</i>	Kestrel
<i>Pied Wagtail</i>	<i>Mallard</i>
<i>Spotted Flycatcher</i>	Tufted Duck
<i>Reed Warbler</i>	<i>Snipe</i>
<i>Sedge Warbler</i>	<i>Coot</i>

The remaining 12 species nested at both areas in very similar numbers and it seems, from consideration of the results, that the seven species in italics are characteristic for this particular gravel pit and are attracted to breed there by the habitat provided. As well as the nesting pairs, there were a few summer visitors from nearby breeding haunts. Swallows were frequent and there were records of greenfinch, chaffinch, house sparrow, mistle thrush, green and great spotted woodpecker and turtle dove.

In addition, five species passed through on spring migration: yellow wagtail, blackcap, whinchat, meadow pipit and swallow.

#### POPULATION OUTSIDE THE BREEDING SEASON.

Meadow pipit, willow warbler and swallow were the only autumn migrants noted in 1950 and the following is a list of all species seen during the seven months from September to March:—

*Moor Mill Control Area—Species in Winter.*

Carrion Crow	Redwing
Rook	Blackbird
Jackdaw	Robin
Magpie	Hedge Sparrow
Starling	Wren
Goldfinch	Swallow
Chaffinch	Green Woodpecker
Yellow Bunting	Great Spotted Woodpecker
House Sparrow	Little Owl
Skylark	Kestrel
Meadow Pipit	Heron
Pied Wagtail	Teal
Blue Tit	Woodpigeon
Willow Warbler	Stock Dove
Fieldfare	Lapwing
Mistle Thrush	Moorhen
Song Thrush.	Partridge

*Variety.* Reference to Tables II, III and VII would suggest that the variety of birds at the Control Area was much less than at Moor Mill, although the species listed for the Survey Area cover three seasons against one at Control. If we compare the last season only, the number of species seen in the breeding season in the Survey area was 55, while the number in the Control area was 23.

No doubt had more visits to the Control area been possible, a longer list would have been obtained, as some of the commoner birds, such as goldfinch and great tit, must assuredly have been present from time to time during the summer months. Nevertheless there remains the strong impression that of the two places the Survey area was the richer in its variety of bird life from April to the end of August.

*Numbers.* On the other hand, owing mainly to the 35 pairs of rooks, the numerical strength of the population was greater at the Control area than at Moor Mill, where, by comparison, the most densely occupied parts, namely the marshy reed bed, supported only fourteen nesting pairs, these being divided among reed bunting, reed and sedge warblers, mallard, moorhen and coot.

The comparative density of breeding population, expressed as the number of pairs per 10 acres, is 17.3 for the Control area, as compared with 8.3 at Moor Mill. If rooks are excluded, the figure for the Control area is 5.6 pairs per 10 acres; this is less than the figure of 8.3 for the whole area at Moor Mill, but is very close to the figure for the land area only, which is 4.5. Thus the figures seem to support the subjective impression that the presence of the gravel pit resulted in a greater density as well as variety of population. But the figures must be treated with some caution, as the presence of the rooks in the Control area may have had some effect on the population of other species, and the differences may in any case not be significant.

36 winter species in all were seen in the Control area, as compared with 39 seen at the Survey area during the same period. Apart from the lapwing, none of the fourteen species of waders observed at Moor Mill were seen at the Control area. As the Control area is so near, and directly downstream in the Ver-Colne Valley, it is possible that they may have passed through unseen. The cover provided by the dense growth of *phragmites* and the stretches of exposed mud, formed by overflow from the Ver and sludge from the gravel-washing machine, combined to attract charadriine species to pause for a time at the gravel pit, when moving across the country on passage. For this reason more opportunity for their observation occurs there, where they were usually watched feeding, than further down the river by the flat and rather featureless water meadows, which have little or no cover and almost no riverside mud to offer.

In the autumn meadow pipits roost on open ground among the pasture grasses, a count of 40 being obtained in September, and throughout the winter months there is the traditional roost in Jack William's Wood, where many hundreds of rooks are joined by a lesser number of jackdaws. Visits of observers were limited to one or two each month and the maximum count of rooks and jackdaws was *c.* 400 and the minimum, 20. Counts of the remaining 28 winter species varied between 10 and 60. Thus, as in summer, owing to the presence of the rookery, total numbers were probably more than at the Survey area, which had an average winter population of 76 birds. If, however, rooks are excluded, the density of birds per 10 acres in winter is: Survey area 26, Control area 12.

To recapitulate, although more accurate figures would probably have been obtained had more visits been possible, it seems that the influence of the gravel pit has been to increase the variety of the local bird life, the numbers of species recorded at Survey and Control areas respectively being 55 and 23 in the breeding season and 39 and 36, outside the breeding season.

When a comparison of the total numbers of birds at the two areas is considered, the rookery presents a problem. If rooks are included, there were more individual birds in the Control area than at the gravel pit throughout the year. But the presence of a rookery may be regarded as unusual. If rooks are excluded, the Survey area shows a greater density of population both in the breeding season and in winter.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The four groups of gravel pits surveyed were carefully selected, out of a total of over 170 similar excavations in the London Area, as representing typical local differences in the character both of their immediate surroundings and of their state of development.

In the three years of the study, over 450 counts were made by observers and additional visits paid during the breeding season to obtain nesting data. It may be thought, therefore, that a very fair picture of the bird life of these artificial waters and their surround-

ings was achieved. The records indicate that a rich variety of birds was seen during the survey, the grand total of species listed being 112.

We have classified the species as to status as follows:—

40 spp. ....	breeding
66 spp. ....	as summer visitors (non-breeding)
26 spp. ....	as spring migrants
23 spp. ....	as autumn migrants
69 spp. ....	as winter residents and visitors

Those listed below were regarded as typical, as they either nested or were resident in winter at all areas. Three species that bred with absolute regularity are underlined.

<i>Breeding Season</i>	<i>Winter</i>
Linnet	Greenfinch
<u>Reed Bunting</u>	Goldfinch
Tree Sparrow	Chaffinch
Skylark	<u>Reed Bunting</u>
<u>Yellow Wagtail</u>	Meadow Pipit
<u>Reed Warbler</u>	Blackbird
Sedge Warbler	Robin
Whitethroat	Coot
Blackbird	Partridge
Mallard	
Tufted Duck	
Gt. Crested Grebe	
Moorhen	
Coot	
Partridge	

To the winter list can be added, with qualifications, great crested grebe, which appeared for varying lengths of time as a visitor, and moorhen, resident at two areas but only an occasional visitor to the third.

These results have been compared with those obtained by F. R. Mann at Ham (Surrey), where he has been carrying out an independent study of some 300 acres of three gravel pits and surrounding country during the past thirty years. It is of interest to note that among the list of species which breed regularly at Ham there are thirteen of the fifteen given above, only sedge warbler and tufted duck not being included.

An examination of the breeding population shows that at Walton the population was less than at the other three areas, whether the figure taken is the total population, or the population of birds associated with water. This, no doubt, is due to the large area now under cultivation, and to the nature of the gravel pits there, with their steep sides and lack of cover. The figures for the birds not associated with water do not vary widely at the other three pits, but at Feltham the water birds, though more numerous than at Walton, are much less



numerous than at Mayesbrook Park and Moor Mill. This suggests, as indeed might be expected, that pits with shelving banks and reed beds or other vegetation growing in or at a level little above the water will support a denser population of water birds than those with precipitous banks running straight down into water.

Throughout the winter months numbers declined in all areas, but Walton was least affected by the change of season, black-headed gulls, lapwings and other gregarious species visiting its arable fields in flocks of some size. Certain species, as for example the snipe at Moor Mill, were more numerous than when breeding and mixed parties of finches and buntings were often recorded. Altogether the winter population, though smaller and less varied than in summer, offered much of interest to the observer.

There was a well-defined passage of migrants through all areas, both in spring and autumn, twelve species appearing on the outward as well as the inward journeys. In late summer and autumn the usual flocking took place and congregations and roosts of considerable magnitude were formed, prior to migration.

The maximum number of species (93) were seen at the smallest area, Moor Mill, but this large variety owed much to its geographical situation on the verge of a regularly used flight route for migrants, along the Colne Valley. This factor and the nature of the pit no doubt account for as many as fifteen species of waders being recorded there.

During the last year of the survey, comparative counts were made at a Control area similar to Moor Mill but without its excavations. The results of this ancillary study confirmed the impression already gained that the digging of the gravel pits with subsequent flooding and attendant growth of vegetation tends to increase the variety of the local bird life, at all seasons of the year. The effect on numbers is not so self-evident, but the data obtained suggest that the bird population in summer may be slightly greater in an area where there is a gravel pit than in a similar area where there is no pit. In winter there appears to be a moderate increase in numbers associated with the cover of the vegetation, even if partly withered down, the food and especially the element of safety afforded to aquatic species by the open stretches of water.

The full data on which this paper is based, together with lists of the species of birds observed, notes on food taken by birds, a summary of the breeding success of the birds at Mayesbrook Park, and lists of the plants at Feltham and Moor Mill, have been deposited in the Society's Library.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ballast Sand & Allied Trades Association, and Messrs. W. J. Lavender, Ltd., for kindly supplying information with regard to the industry. P. W. E. Currie for his help and advice in connection with the analyses of the results.

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Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4. Sketch maps of Feltham, Mayesbrook Park, Moor Mill and Walton, designed to indicate the character of their immediate surroundings.

## Bird Ringing Report, 1951-1952

**D**ESPITE an increase in ringers—from 38 to 49—the number of birds ringed dropped to 2,779, as compared with 4,112 last year. The main reason for this decrease is that more than 800 fewer starlings were ringed in Trafalgar Square this year. The total number of species ringed, however, remained constant at 68, of which the most notable were 7 Little Ringed Plovers and a Pectoral Sandpiper—the latter trapped at Epsom by I. C. T. Nisbet. Nearly half the birds ringed this year were starlings; 710 by the Starling Enquiry and 528 by other ringers. Next in numerical order were: Blackbird, 298; Blue Tit, 119; Robin, 98; Song Thrush, 90; Great Tit, 82; Chaffinch, 81; Greenfinch, 66, and Whitethroat, 64.

Nearly 200 recoveries of birds ringed by members have been notified during the year, of which no fewer than 140 related to Starlings.

Details of the most interesting recoveries are, as usual, shown under species in the systematic list.

<i>Ringer</i>	<i>Nestlings</i>	<i>Trapped</i>	<i>Total</i>
M. J. Ardley	—	4	4
C. B. Ashby	—	33	33
J. S. Bailey	32	1	33
L. Baker	7	26	33
T. L. Bartlett	42	86	128
A. H. Betts	7	1	8
Dr. G. Beven	44	1	45
S. Boardman	2	14	16
J. F. Burton	4	11	15
C. L. Collenette	27	3	30
S. Cramp	—	14	14
H. A. Craw	10	15	25
J. Farrand	—	35	35

<i>Ringer</i>	<i>Nestlings</i>	<i>Trapped</i>	<i>Total</i>
R. S. R. Fitter ... ..	14	—	14
H. B. Fossey ... ..	3	13	16
J. Garstang ... ..	38	18	56
A. Gibbs ... ..	35	66	101
D. Goodwin ... ..	12	105	117
R. S. M. Green ... ..	3	1	4
H. F. Greenfield ... ..	3	1	4
C. J. O. Harrison ... ..	102	16	118
G. F. Hawkins ... ..	—	2	2
P. J. Hayman ... ..	5	—	5
Sqn./Ldr. H. S. Hemsley-Hall	—	63	63
A. G. Hocken ... ..	1	8	9
R. C. Homes ... ..	2	43	45
A. E. Jolley ... ..	—	14	14
Miss L. B. Langham ... ..	16	1	17
G. E. Manser ... ..	64	75	139
R. G. Mayall ... ..	—	2	2
B. S. Milne ... ..	—	27	27
H. Murray ... ..	—	39	39
A. F. Myers ... ..	7	30	37
I. C. T. Nisbet ... ..	12	27	39
K. H. Palmer ... ..	3	51	54
W. D. Park ... ..	5	58	63
D. Parr ... ..	6	81	87
J. L. F. Parslow ... ..	19	—	19
D. A. Preston ... ..	3	14	17
F. W. P. Radford ... ..	33	11	44
B. A. Richards ... ..	3	—	3
Miss D. A. Rook ... ..	—	103	103
P. E. L. Simmonds ... ..	—	39	39
W. T. Slade ... ..	18	34	52
Dr. D. F. Street ... ..	—	39	39
W. G. Teagle ... ..	6	3	9
C. A. White ... ..	—	8	8
J. A. Wigzell ... ..	25	220	245
Starling Enquiry ... ..	—	710	710
Total, 1951/52 ... ..	613	2166	2779
Total, 1950/51 ... ..	583	3529	4112

Notes on colour-ringing by members have been published in Sectional Bulletins, Nos. 3, 4 and 5.

In response to the appeal made in the last *L.B.R.* for information on all aspects of ringing activities some material has been received but more would be welcomed by the Ringing Secretary who would also like to have speedy notification of any accessible roosts in, or near, the Society's area. In this connection some successful night ringing of gulls at roosts was undertaken by members at the end of the year and the ringing of other species at roosts might profitably be attempted.

Many ringers will mourn the death of Mr. J. E. S. Dallas whose obituary appears in the current issue of the *London Naturalist*. He was one of the earliest L.N.H.S. ringers, being active as far back as 1927 when there were only 9 ringers and the Society's grand total was 490 for the year.

# Skokholm Bird Observatory

## Council for the Promotion of Field Studies

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Skokholm, an island of 260 acres, three miles from the Pembrokeshire coast, supports a breeding population of some 20,000 birds. Among them are the manx shearwater, storm petrel, puffin, razorbill, guillemot, raven, buzzard, oystercatcher, lapwing and others. Most of these birds can be studied with ease. Expeditions are made at night to catch manx shearwaters and storm petrels. Three heligoland traps enable visitors to catch many of the migrants passing through the island and to see and handle both the common and unusual birds. As well as catching birds there are many other ways in which bird-watchers can assist the observatory staff.

In 1954 we propose to seek more assistance from the visitors than in previous years and at the same time to give more instruction. It is hoped that under the direction of the warden the visitors will undertake co-operative work on the sea-bird population, but we would like to emphasize that this work is only for those who would join in and no one need feel obliged to take part.

Accommodation in the Observatory buildings is provided for eight visitors a week and the charge is four and a half guineas. For further particulars, apply to the Warden, Dale Fort Field Centre, Haverfordwest, Pems.

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A programme designed to forward the study of field ornithology needs organisation and money. The Trust welcomes, therefore, the support of members of local natural history societies and can offer a good library service, meetings in many centres, and the help of Regional Representatives. Early in 1954 the Trust's periodic Bulletin will be replaced by a quarterly scientific journal, to be edited by H. N. Southern; this will contain full reports of the Trust's field investigations, general articles, book reviews and information on current activities.

Ordinary membership, open to anyone over the age of sixteen, costs One Pound annually, but members under twenty-one may pay Ten Shillings. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary of the Trust at the address above, or from Mr. R. C. Homes, the Regional Representative for the London area.

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